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Vol. 11 - #5 - Issue 65 - August/September 2015

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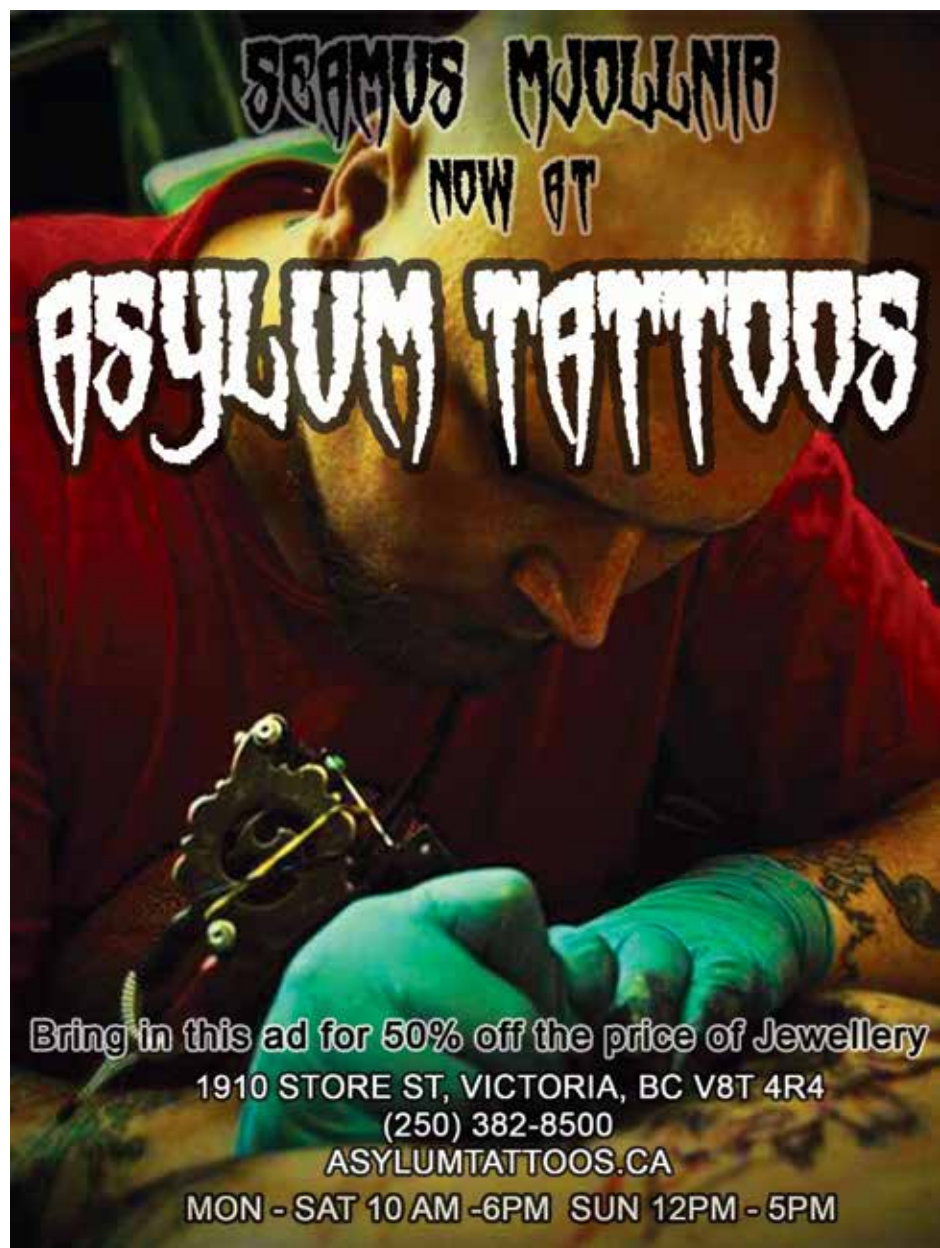
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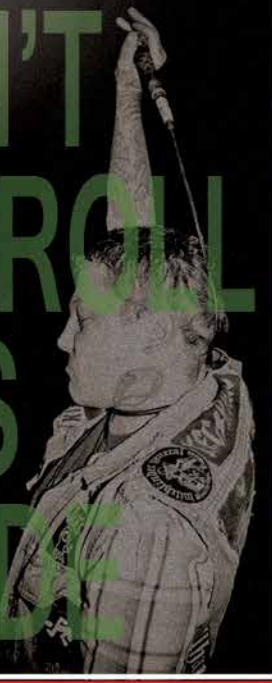
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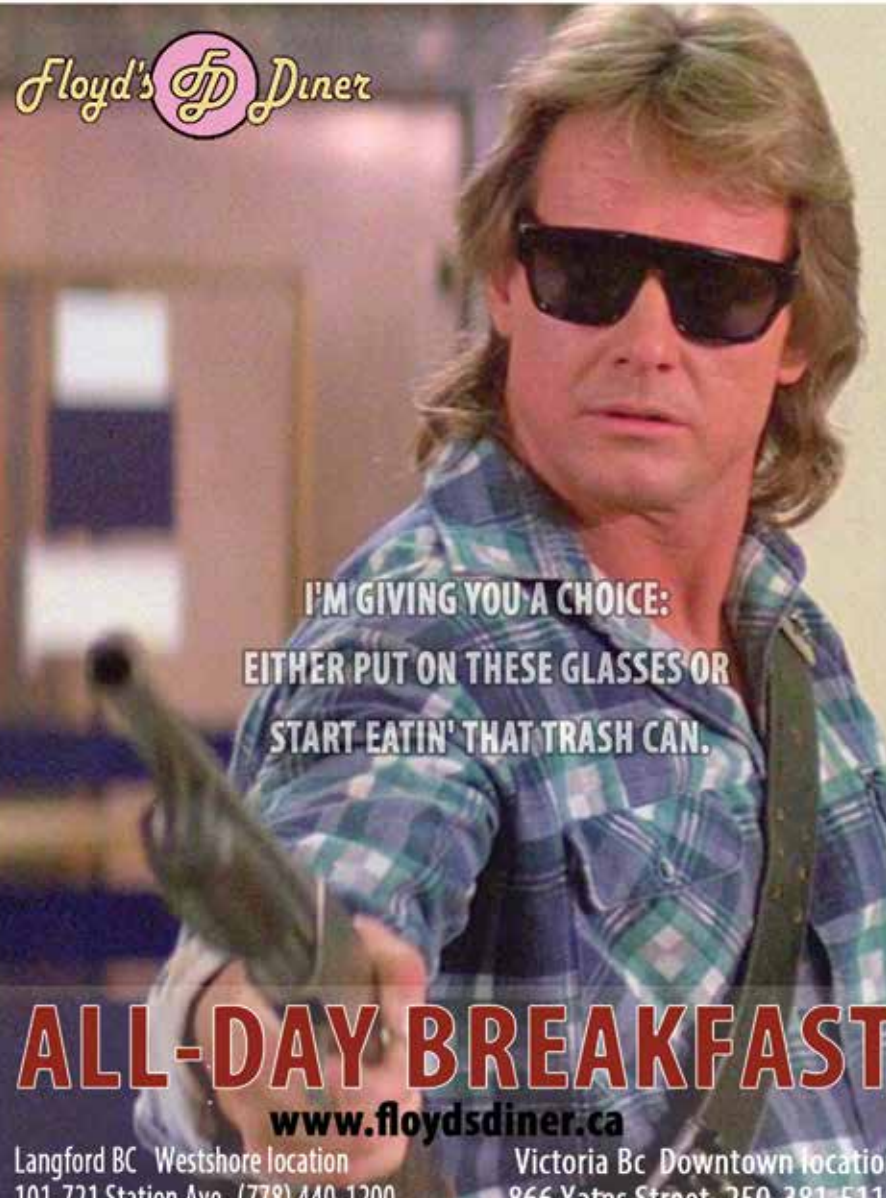
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Unleash The Archers

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Vancouver's power metal sensations Unleash the Archers stand poised for major advancement into Europe after signing with Napalm Records, filming videos in Nevada and releasing their crushing fourth record, *Time Stands Still*. Read on with vocalist Brittney Slayes to get the details...

Absolute Underground: Greetings, where are you now? What's going on?

Brittney Slayes: Hello! I am in my apartment in False Creek, Vancouver. It's kinda near Science World, oh wait sorry, ahem, the Telus World Of Science!

AU: New album rocks – songs, art, performance – it is all there. You've had the CD release shows, how was the response?

BS: Thanks! It's been great so far, more than we could have expected! The CD release shows went amazingly well, and the reviews that are coming in have all been really positive. I mean, all you really can do is hope for the best, but prepare for the worst, so we are just happy that people are liking it.

AU: The lyric topics of new album focused on touring Canada as an independent touring band. What lead you in this direction?

BS: We've had a lot of experiences on the road in Canada, journeying around, and so we wanted to veil it all in a kind of fantastical allegory. Being an independent band in Canada has its ups and downs; I mean the towns, the shows and the

fans are all rad, but the 14-hour drives in between cities are not. And that's one of the shorter ones! You can't even tour from November to May, but if you have the balls to hit those highways, then we'll brave

the winter storms to come see you. Canadian metalheads are the best! The song 'Frozen Steel' is all about them, and 'Tonight We Ride' is about the feeling of anticipation you have the night before heading out on tour...

AU: The video for "Tonight We Ride" is outta control! It looks like it's straight out of the latest *Mad Max* film. How did it come about?

BS: It was all thanks to our director, Nathan Cox. He had a hookup with the Death Guild Thunderdome camp from Burning Man. Originally we wanted to film in the actual Thunderdome they set up there every BM, but for legal reasons you can't film anything for commercial use at BM so we waited till after and the guys from DGTD were kind enough to drive us around in their post-apocalyptic cars! Doing circles in the desert for hours on end, but man it was fun. We actually filmed it in 2013, as we were going to release *Time Stands Still* in spring 2014, but then that got pushed back, and then we signed to Napalm and they pushed it back again... It ended up coinciding perfectly with the release of *Mad Max: Fury Road* though, which was completely unplanned and totally rad! It was fate, I guess.

AU: You've studied opera singing, is that right? Also, who is your favourite female soul vocalist?

BS: Well sort of, I've studied classical. I've never had opera training, and sang arias or anything, although it would be fun to try. I learned through choir, and one-on-one sessions with this amazing prof from Oxford. I would love to get lessons one day; there is always room to grow! For female vocalists, lately I've really been into Triosphere

and Ida Haukland. She's not soul, but she's amazing. Power metal with clean vocals is my favourite style. Lee Aaron sings soul or jazz now though, doesn't she? Killer metal vocalist from the 80s, just google 'metal queen'!

AU: Who will you tour with next?

BS: We are touring with Hibria this fall, they are a killer power metal band from Brazil, and Napalm is working on something for Europe in early 2016. We'll keep you informed!

AU: How is touring with four guys? Who keeps the band in line, who is the parental figure?

BS: Well it's funny you should say that, because we used to make that same joke all the time; Brayden was the Mom, and Scott was the aloof older sister and Grant was the hyper little brother, but the dynamic has changed quite a bit now with the new members. I am definitely the one that has to kick everyone in the butt to get going, and I keep the place tidy, of course.

AU: The band signed with Napalm Records.... that is sick, tell us more please!

BS: We signed with Napalm, based in Austria, in December 2014. Not too sure how they heard of us, but we have friends on the label (Striker, Crimson Shadows, Mortillery) so they probably put in a good word. We were fighting joining a label for a long time, we liked being independent and we were doing okay. It was a long process, but Napalm was really open to compromise, which was quite surprising, actually. There are definitely some cons, but so far they are far outweighed by the pros. We look forward to working together.

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE



AU: This opens some European tour dates perhaps?

BS: Definitely! We already have something for spring 2016, and hopefully that will only be the beginning. We would love to get over there to play festivals next summer, as well as jump on bigger tours if we can. The metal scene there is absolutely ginormous; I am pretty sure we have no idea how rad it's going to be. The whole attitude about music is different, I feel there is more respect for it. We hear the venues are decked out for touring musicians, complete with beds and showers and kitchens... Can't wait!

AU: Final words to the Canadians out there?

BS: Thanks to the fans, and all the people who work to create the scene: fans, bands, producers, promoters, media - everybody. One day we hope countries like Germany with huge metal scenes will look to Canada and say, "Look at that scene! We want to travel there!" Keep on keeping on!

www.unleashthearchers.com/



Fuck The Facts

Interview by Andre Laniel

Absolute Underground: Before we go any further, can you tell us who's who in the band?

Topon Das: I started Fuck The Facts as a recording project during the late 90s. The first band formation started in 2001, but I'm the only one left from that lineup. Our vocalist Mel joined in 2002, our drummer, Vil (who actually originally joined as a guitarist), joined us in 2005; our bassist, Marc, and other guitarist, Johnny, joined in 2008.

AU: How would you describe the new album?

Marc Bourgon: It's a great representation of what I think is an ever-evolving mix of what we are excited about musically. It has elements of what we've done in the past, combined with some new stuff that has weaved its way into our songwriting. Front to back, I think it's pretty raging.

TD: For anyone that's familiar with our music, I say that it's probably the most similar to our *Disgorge Mexico* album and definitely our *Amer* EP; since those are basically the B-sides from *Desire Will Rot*. If you're not familiar with the band, I would say that we're a bit of a melting pot of styles. We like to take grindcore, death metal, punk, and hardcore, and mix it with more experimental

styles; even noise. For those that don't listen to this kind of music, it'll all just sound like noise.

AU: The latest release was recorded DIY style, is it because you fear to lose control over your music?

TD: There was never a fear of losing creative control or anything of the sort. Even when we were on Relapse, we were never stopped from doing anything or even told to go in a certain direction. It's been all our ideas since day one. The main reason that this album is being released independently is because our contract with Relapse ended. We shopped the record around a bit to some labels that we could have been interested in working with, but we got no reciprocated interest, so we just decided to release it ourselves. Even though we spent six years on Relapse and have worked with some smaller labels in the past, I really feel like we've always been a DIY unit, so it just comes naturally to us.

AU: What does DIY ethos mean to you and how does it affect your music?

TD: It just means getting shit done. People in general like to pass the buck and feel like if they're not getting something or doing something, it's because of someone else. When you're in a position like us, where no one is ever going to make any money off your band, you have to realize the limits of the support that you're going to get. When I started Fuck The Facts, there was never any intention of getting rich and famous, obviously, I'm not that delusional. I just wanted to do SOMETHING. I spent years in bands before that would just talk and talk about doing stuff with lots of 'ifs' and 'buts' and then never actually putting the work into making these things happen. With Fuck The Facts, I wanted to release music and I wanted to play shows; that's it. That was the goal and that's what we did. Eventually signing to Relapse was great, but we never lost sight of knowing that if we wanted to do something, we needed to take the steps to making it happen. I'm extremely proud of the things I've accomplished with FTF, and it's not because we're the best band out there, it's because we put a lot of hard work into making our goals happen. For me that's DIY; a sense of responsibility with a fire under your ass.

AU: How did you come up with the songs for the new release? Is there a theme or an inspiration for the album?

TD: Everyone writes in the band, so it really is a combination of all five members' ideas and influences. There's a lot of sending demos back and forth via the internet, since some of us live in different cities, but there's also a good number of songs that came together just from jamming out ideas, which is my favourite way to write. Once we have a solid set of songs for an album, there's a fair amount of pre-production involved, as we fine tune everything and we also figure out which songs might not fit with the rest of the album. This is pretty much a process we've used for years now, so even if it sounds like a lot of work, it actually all comes together quite naturally. As for the theme of the album, it can come across as a bit negative, as it touches on doing what we do with getting older, and in a sense basically 'giving up.' We're reaching a point in our lives where we are all real fucking adults now. Most of us have bought houses recently and some of us are starting families. We have jobs and real-life responsibilities, and we just don't have the time to tour like we used to, and even just the time to invest into the band like we used to. It can be a bit of a bummer, because you still want to be that kid that's throwing his life away to be on the road and do it all, but I've reached at point that I like being home and spending time with my family and friends. I feel like I'm at a crossroads in my life and to continue pounding the pavement at the expense of everything else is just ridiculous. It's time for the band to take a backseat to the rest of my life, rather than sit in the driver's seat like it has for the past 10+ years.

AU: Do you feel that this release has something different compared to the other albums?

MB: Definitely. We're never sure of what the end result of the writing we do will be. There's never a plan of any kind and it keeps it exciting for us to keep doing it. The writing is spread pretty evenly among all of us and the songs are coated in a life-induced "rage-film" that felt good to capture on the record. It's definitely different from what we've done in the past, except for the blast-beats. I'm sure we'll always have those.

AU: Were there any challenges you encountered with the creation of this new release?



Topon Das: I think the only real challenge was finishing the album. We recorded it in December 2012, but didn't actually mix it until early this year. Everything is done in our own home studio, so as awesome and comfortable as it is, it sort of leaves the door open for things to drag on for way too long. It's something that we've realized and definitely don't want to do again.

AU: Any songs that were left out of the album that we will hear somewhere else?

MB: Yes. Our *Amer* EP is composed of songs that we felt wouldn't play nice with the album cuts. I'm happy to say we have nothing left over from this release, and we can start fresh with the next one.

AU: For the tour, is it important for you to keep a connection to the fan base by performing in smaller venues?

Melanie Mongeon: It is the reality that we are in, and are happy to be in. A lot of shows we play are in the more DIY scene, which includes a lot of unconventional and small venues. There is something great about tiny spaces. The crowd and the band have this connection that is harder to make in bigger venues. As an audience [member], I prefer going to shows in smaller venues as well. That being said, we do play and enjoy playing in bigger spaces, it is just a different vibe. The first few times we played on a big stage, we were not comfortable; it was not the sound and set-up we were comfortable with. Over the years, we got better at adapting to whatever the conditions are.

TD: Basically, we'll play wherever they put us. But it's a lot more fun to play a packed room. Playing to 50 people in a 500 capacity room is never a good time.

AU: Anywhere you guys are excited to go?

MM: We all love Europe in general. I mean, the food, the beer, the architecture, the history, the organized squats and punk scenes; it's hard to be bored!

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FALSE FLAG

False Flag

Interview by Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: How did you guys come together to form False Flag?

Russ Gauthier: It came on as a side band, basically. I was playing full time in Lordosis, kind of just being more of a drummer than a guitar player. I got really sick and tired of that because I took too long of a break from playing guitar. I had come off of the last tour that we did two years ago, bought an eight-string guitar and just started writing again. Nick and I started the band together; Dan joined soon after. We got Mike in there and we slowly kind of got different people in the band. Nick ended up leaving the band this year and John joined in January. We were with Nick for two years, and it was a three-piece for the start of it. Dan, Mike and I played in a band before, but John and I also played in We Found the Body. He's a fucking bomb-ass drummer, and I always thought it would be awesome to have him playing the tight riffs that I wrote, instead of someone else's, haha.

AU: With the addition of a fourth member, how did the vision and dynamic of the band change?

Russ: It just thickened the sound a lot, and

Mike's a very melodic guitar player so the sound changed a lot... a lot of guitar harmonies. There's more classic rock with Mike in any band, because Mike's not really a traditional metal guitar player.

Mike: Yeah, I like Boston... and Thin Lizzy. Russ and I have been jamming guitars and stuff, just over the years and whatnot, but our styles mix really well together so we complement each other quite nicely.

AU: Several subgenres could apply to your style and aural aesthetic. How would you guys classify your music?

Russ: I just call it groove to make it easier. It almost dispels any kind of people hoping for like black metal or something. If you say "groove" it's going to just get rid of a lot of people immediately. I kind of know that it's unpopular to say "groove" so I just do the thing that's not cool. We could be like, 'We're like melodic tech death,' and that's like the coolest thing, but I just think 'groove metal' sounds silly, and we are silly so I think that's the most appropriate name.

AU: You guys incorporate elements of occult mythology and sociopolitical issues into your music in a passive sort of way. Where do you guys pull inspiration from and how do those influences bleed into your music without oversaturating it?

Russ: All the songs are personal. I like to write in a way where it's personal but you can kind of interpret it in both ways. So if you're looking at it in a political way, it's going to seem political. They're very broad lyrics; they're not very specific, so you can really just paint your own picture with them—kind of put your own experiences into them because they're just so broad. They're very vague.

AU: Nest of Vipers is your third album—your second EP after having previously released your first full studio-length album, Suffer in Silence. How does this particular release reflect the progression of False Flag's sound?

John: It's almost like an experimental phase.

Russ: Yeah it's definitely experimental because

it's a lot more rock and roll. I guess we started out with the first couple albums a little more straight up groove or death metal or whatever. There's a little more clean singing in there—not super clean singing, but there's some melody in the vocals for sure. The opening track sounds like it could be off an older album of ours. So I like to have that kind of old sound existing with the new sound, putting just a little bit of an experimental quality to the old sound—a progression, if you will. We had more fun with this one, I think. It's not so serious-sounding; it's more of a party. It's the first album we all wrote as a group, in some way or another. Everybody had their input in the tracks and we all had a part in making it.

AU: How does the Vipers EP compare to previous albums in terms of subject matter and emotional weight?

Russ: It's just as frustrated; it's just as angry. It marks a period of time. Now it's old to us; it's new coming out, but they're songs that I was writing six months to a year ago. I'm kind of just excited to write the next album. It's just kind of a snap shot. It's a transitional album because we're not going to sound the same after this. We realize we have a lot of options; we can pull off a lot of different genres.

John: The next album will sound a lot different because with this one Russ wrote all of the drum tracks, except for the title track. I wrote the drums for that. For the next album, I will primarily write the drum tracks. So it's going to change the band. There are certain things about groove metal, as Russ would describe, that would require me to play the drums in a certain way.

AU: The title of the album and the first few

CALGARY CARNAGE



tracks indicate a more aggressive and defiant approach to the material. Is this an accurate presumption?

Russ: I think it's more about the sound of it being aggressive. It comes off as aggressive; it's perceived as aggressive, but at the same time, there's definitely a sense of humour in there. I mean, the title track comes from me watching Batman while wasted and being like, 'That's a fucking awesome line!' I get my inspiration from movies and things other than metal.

Mike: Another thing is, we take our music very seriously, but at the same time we're just a bunch of fucking clowns. We don't take ourselves too seriously, but there's a lot of work put into the songs.

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AUGUST 2015

- 01** LUCID SCREAM
MONARCH SKY + ILLUMINATED MINERVA + TRITON
- 06** TRAIN BIGGER MONKEYS
EYE OF HORUS + HIS LAST WORDS + PERCEPTION OF PAIN + PENITENTZ
- 07** NORTHLANE
LIKE MOTHS TO FLAMES + IN HEARTS WAKE + OCEANS ATE ALASKA
- 08** CRITICAL HIT! FANTASY AND GAMER SHOW
THWOMP + DJ JUNX

AUG 15

The Marlbro's
Thank You, and Goodnight
BLACK PHOENIX ORCHESTRA + TELLY

SEPT 08

AEON
HOLD BEAST + SOREPTION

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- 21** STONE IRIS ALBUM RELEASE
- 22** HANG THE DJ NO COVER BEFORE 10PM
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JESSIE ELLIOTT

SEPT 25

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- 12** HANG THE DJ
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- 17** FAKE MUSTACHE
- 18** CLASS ACTION
- 19** EVERY HOUR KILLS ALBUM RELEASE
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Dirty Kid Discount

Interview by Mr. Plow

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what role do you play in the band?

Jay Crash: I'm Jay Crash. I play bass in Dirty Kid Discount! I also scream a lot and do frog vocals. Not like Kermit the Frog, but more like a poisonous toad.

AU: How did Dirty Kid Discount become what it is today? How did you form?

Jay Crash: Dirty Kid Discount started about a year or so after the disbanding of the Ghost Town Rejects. Pitch, Icky, and myself were all a part of that project. So DKD was a more serious approach at a new project. It started with some simple demos and getting back to jamming regularly. Jake Carpenter (guitar) joined after a couple of jam sessions and then we started playing anywhere and everywhere almost immediately. I think Jake was only in the band for a week before we played our first show. Jesse Cobb followed on drums shortly after Jake joined and Emily Elizondo started singing with us part time before

she started playing both mandolin and musical saw. Once we had that lineup we started making our first record and planning our first out-of-town trip. About eight months after we started playing shows, we had a super long winter in Portland and further continued recording and developing the project. Erin Wolf joined the band, playing banjo. We had another guitar player (Mark Paschen) join the band at the same time. Mark was in the band for about eight months and did Punk Rock Bowling with us the first time around, before he moved on to his own project. Dirty Kid Discount has been mainly seven members since our first tour across the country in 2013. Since then, we have been playing gigs, touring, and working on music in the studio. John Underwood joined the band most recently on trumpet and Junkyard Amy Lee guest sings with us.

AU: When you write a song, is it a collaborative effort or does one person do most of the writing?

Jay Crash: Kinda both. A lot of the songs are written by individual members, but there are some collaborations between members as well. Even when an individual member brings forth a song that's been written, the band provides character that shapes the song even more. I guess that's what you get with an eight-piece band. The songs also take shape in a couple different worlds because we play most of our songs both acoustic and what we call "full electric," so two versions of our songs exist most of the time.

AU: How hard is it to organize practices or book a show or a tour, with eight members in the band?

Jay Crash: Scheduling our practices and tours is pretty easy, easier than any other band I have ever been in. We share responsibilities and set up tours and gigs in the best interest of the band way in advance so that we can schedule full rehearsals before our events and not stress ourselves out. During the time we're not rehearsing or gigging, we get together in smaller groups and work on music and everything else that goes into being in a band. We do everything ourselves for the most

part, with the help of some close friends.

AU: I've seen you play in parking lots and on street corners, on stages big and small, is there anywhere you won't play?

Jay Crash:

Yeah, Dirty Kid Discount plays a lot of different places because we can pick and choose whether to play acoustic or full electric. We feel our music is for everyone, not just a focused group of people.

We are open to playing anywhere the vibes are good and where it makes sense to us. We get creative with it and we also do sets where we play acoustic, take a break, and then play a full electric set and fill out the entire night ourselves. I guess the only place or situation we won't play is where the vibes are bad or it's not safe. As much as we'd like to, you probably won't see Dirty Kid Discount playing in the middle of a riot, but from time to time we have to stand our ground in the streets. Dealing with cops and crazy people happens from time to time, as much as we try to avoid it. We're really into playing an awesome taco stand! We will never play for Nazis or any kind of racist, sexist, homophobic groups of any kind!

AU: Describe your band's sound in one sentence.

Jay Crash: Well, I guess our friends Days n Daze said it best: "Dirty Kid Discount will melt your faces into your toilet parts!"

AU: You have a seven-inch, Sharpen Your

PLOW'S PICK



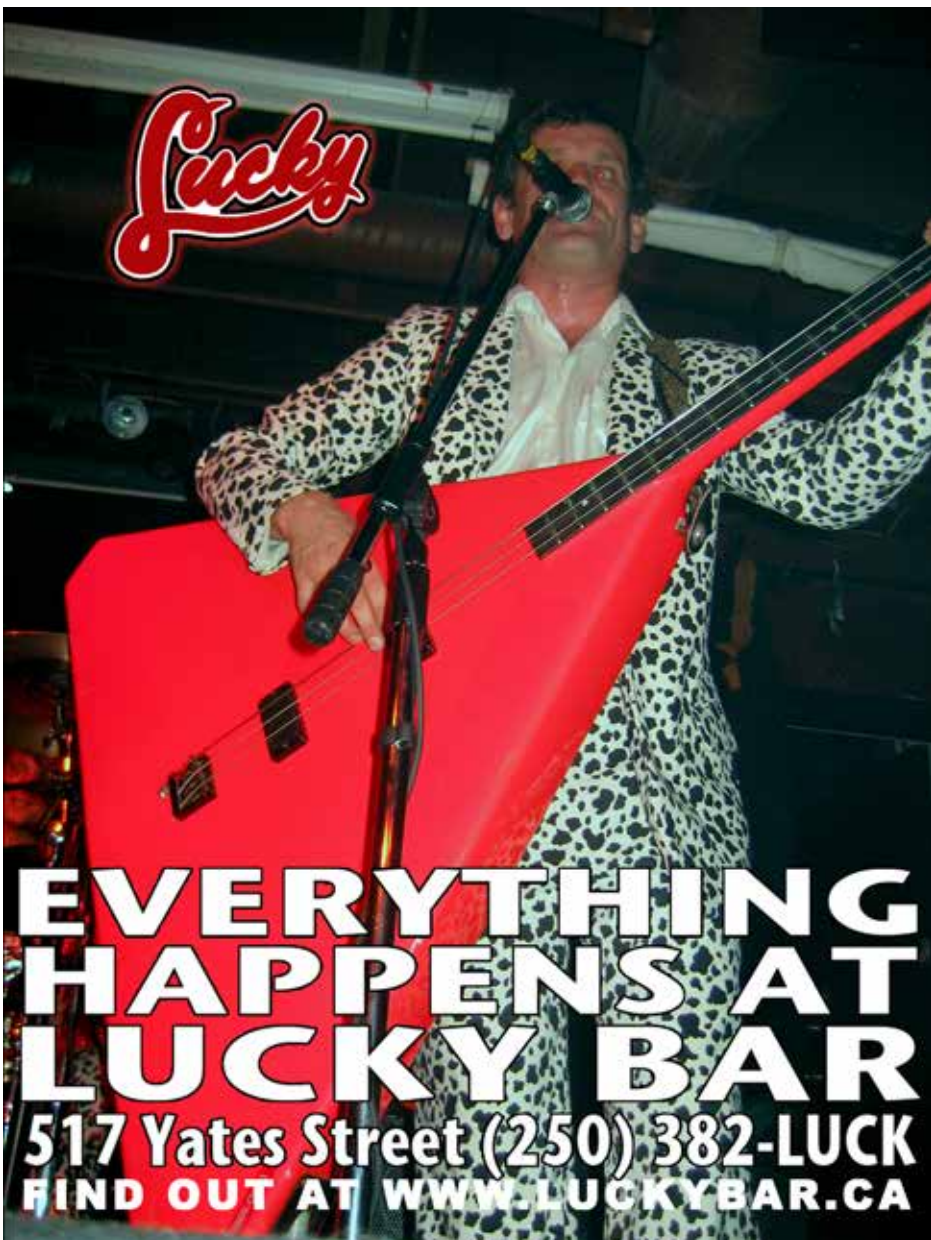
Knives as Evil Threatens the Land, and a CD entitled A Life Amongst the Ruins. Any plans to release new material?

Jay Crash: Yes, DKD is currently working on six tracks right now for an EP project and we're preparing for a full-length album that we are gonna start recording in the fall. We plan to raise all our own funds by doing benefit shows and raising awareness. We are calling our DIY fund raising campaign "Busk the World." We plan to tour Europe upon the release of our full-length record next year.

AU: Shamelessly promote whatever you want here:

Jay Crash: We'll see ya on the road! We're playing a lot of shows this year and raising the funds for Dirty Kid Discount to Busk the World!

www.facebook.com/DirtyKidDiscount



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Beyond Creation

Interview by Erik Lindholm

AU: Hello out there! Where are you now, and what are you up to? Set the scene for the readers out there.

Simon Girard: Hi! In a couple of days, we are heading to the US for Summer Slaughter Tour 2015 and we are so excited about this, and to meet new fans as well. We are currently into booking 2015 to promote *Earthborn Evolution* and discover new places.

AU: What makes you most excited about this tour?

SG: It will be an epic tour with awesome bands and this tour will allow us to play some of the biggest stages in new cities we never visited before!

AU: Release of new album in November 2014... where do you go from here in the studio? What do you want to record next?

SG: I've started composing news songs and riffs but I'm pretty much just booking tours right now. This is only the start for us, so a next album will come in the next few years for sure. Composing is always a nice part of the process because this is creation, exploring ambiance, new techniques and new musical feelings.

AU: You're based in Montreal... what is your favourite aspect of the music scene in the city?

SG: I think that a lot of bands are unique, but in a way, we are all learning new aspects from one another in extreme music now, more than ever! When new bands come out or when a new album is out, we're influenced by their new ideas and freshness in music. I also think we might have influenced them as well. We all jam in the same building called 'Cit  2000, where we go to practice or see another band jamming, drink a beer with

friends and go to many local [shows] so it helps in keeping the music alive!

AU: Can you share some non-metal influences in your playing? There is so much melody in your brand of metal, and fans are curious to know what fuels your amazing sounds.

SG: I'm pretty much into progressive rock music like Guthrie Govan, Pink Floyd, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Queen, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and all those players who played with their heart, searching for new sounds and feels.

Philippe Boucher: For my drumming, I'm very influenced by Buddy Rich, he's maybe my only non-metal influence since I've started to play drums. I love everything about his playing! He helped me to develop a lot of groovy techniques.

AU: Can you describe some of your practice regimes for rehearsing for touring? Each player in the band has many projects on the go, do you have time for the whole band to practice frequently, or is there much individual play?

SG: We practice all together once a week, and when a tour is approaching, we rehearse twice a week or more. It's important to keep playing all the songs even if we're alone and learning new stuff, as it allows us to evolve with our instruments.

AU: The new video for "Fundamental Process"

shows the virtuosity of the band live - you make it look easy! Who are some of your live music heroes, that you are inspired by in terms of stagemanship?

PB: I don't think I have just one hero in particular, but I can name a couple of musicians or bands that I really like to see live. Jason Keyser (Origin) is certainly one of the most brutal vocalists I've ever seen! I love his energy, it makes the show even more intense. Dying Fetus, Nile, Crowbar and Cryptopsy are all awesome bands to see. Black metal bands are good to see live, too, (maybe because it's my favourite genre of metal). Not only for the music, but for the characters that they create live, it fascinates me. Many of them are imposing, they have a really good presence and I think it's important for a band to do a real show! Bands like Mayhem, Marduk, Immortal, Watain, Behemoth (if we can call their music black metal, I don't want people to throw rocks at me, haha, you know what it is).

AU: Areas of science research you find curious, that you want to see advancement in? The latest record felt lyrically to describe worldwide dystopia... perhaps a warning to today's society?

SG: It is a hard question, because we can always evolve in all aspects, but I just wish for advancement that could help people and the environment at the same time. As an example, the electric car... a lot of money wisely invested



since 1990 by companies in something good on all points, including environmental, but those cars seem to be stifled by the governments in favour of profits from fuel. So I feel like a lot of science research just depends on the financial aspect and funding instead of the common good and actual advancement that it could bring to the world.

AU: Have you explored the idea of a Massive Montreal Metal tour? Can we hope to see Beyond Creation, Voivod, Gorguts, Martyr and many other Montreallers out on tour together?

SG: We spoke several times about this idea because there's so many talented bands and musicians here, but you know, it is always hard to have the right time frame and availability from every band. But hopefully, we'll do this in the near future.

AU: Last words to metalheads across Canada?

BC: Keep it alive, Canada, and we're looking forward to seeing you again! Cheers!

www.facebook.com/BeyondCreationOfficial/



Elderorth

Interview by Andre Laniel

Elderorth is a band from Montreal that explores metal in their own way, mixing melodies, techniques and experimentations. *Mystic* is the name of their latest album. Guitarist Collin McGee took the time to answer some questions about the band, the new album and what's to be expected from Elderorth.

Absolute Underground: Who's in the band?

Collin McGee: Guitar/Vocals

Phil Landryx: Drums

Xavier Sperdouklis: Bass

Jonathan Vezina: Vocals

AU: How did the Elderorth begin?

Collin McGee: Originally it started as a one-man project back in British Columbia, but then I moved to Montreal to form a full lineup. Things have progressed much since then, and we now have two albums released.

AU: How do you describe your music?

CM: I would like to describe it as something very imaginative, dreamy and emotional at times.

AU: What influences your music?

CM: Literally everything. I listen to a lot of movie soundtracks, video game music and TV show themes as an influence.

AU: Is there a concept to Elderorth's latest album, *Mystic*?

CM: Lyrically there isn't a specific concept; however, musically it's based around east Oriental music.



AU: Was it a long process to create the songs?

CM: Somewhat, I wrote some basic ideas and reworked them over and over for several weeks until I was satisfied with the final product.

AU: Do you feel that your sound changed since the previous, self-titled album?

CM: It really has changed a lot since. We still have our melodic side, but we've added more elements, like the oriental influence and the eight-string guitars. We didn't want to sound exactly like a standard symphonic or power metal band. We wanted to be unique, and that was the goal when *Mystic* was written.

AU: Are there songs that were left out for this album that we might hear later?

CM: Yes, there are actually a lot of songs like that, even from the first album too! I keep them until I decide to rework them into a song that I am more

satisfied with. Some leftover songs will appear on the next album after I've reworked them.

AU: For this album, you used instruments from East Asia. Was it hard to master them and fit them into your music?

CM: We mainly used erhu, shamisen, kotos, gongs and wood blocks. I found they were able to fit into the songs naturally after putting some time into them. There is a lot going on in some of the songs, so it did make it a bit challenging.

AU: Is there a tour coming up to promote the album?

CM: We don't have a tour planned yet, but there

are some show dates coming up. We are looking into a tour once we have a permanent drummer, for now we have Landryx from UnExpect filling in.

AU: Do you have plans for new songs?

CM: Yes, quite a lot actually. Some songs for the third album are written already, but need more work. Our sound will keep progressing as we make more and more albums. There will be more new elements coming up! So stay tuned!

elderorth.com
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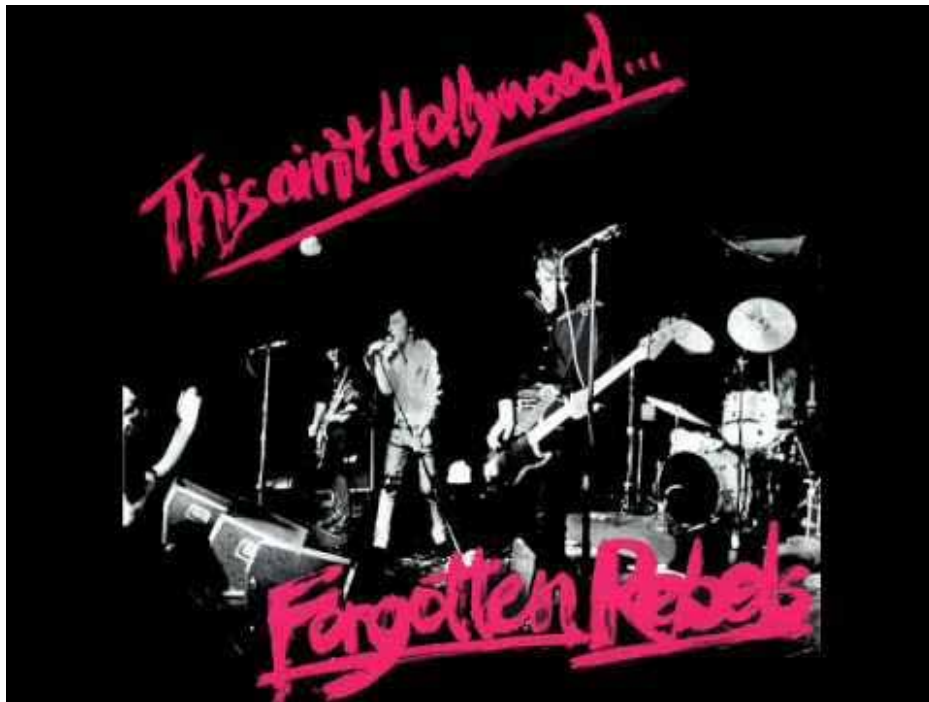
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9



The Forgotten Rebels

Interview by Jim Hare

Absolute Underground: Who and what inspired you to start the Forgotten Rebels?

Mickey De Sadist: I was a lousy MotoCross rider and would never make a championship racer. I always loved loud guitars and didn't yet play, but was interested. I sold my MX bike and bought a guitar and amp.

AU: Who would you say is your biggest musical influence and why?

MDS: The Stooges' *Raw Power* album and *Mott the Hoople Live* album. Power, brains and a bit of sophistication.

AU: What are your thoughts on the Canadian punk scene now as compared to the 80s? What has changed? What has stayed the same? What

should or shouldn't have?

MDS: [There are] more bands now and more bands that are lead by the ladies and ladies-only bands - a very good thing, as new ideas are coming out musically as well as aesthetically. Too many burnouts happened through those years. RIP. All of them - we miss you!

AU: What would you say is your personal favourite Forgotten Rebels album and why? How about the one you like the least?

MDS: *This Ain't Hollywood* is my fave, as it shows the glam roots of us, *In Love with the System* because it shows our punk roots, *Untitled* because our evolution as a band is evident and our recent live album - *Last Ones Standing* because it really shows us now! Those are my faves. *Nobodies Heroes* was good, but way overproduced - too many takes of everything. [We] had to bear through it, as the band was doing quite well - a

few duff songs, good mix, my least fave.

AU: Over the years, what have been your most memorable moments as a Rebel? How about the best and/or worst stage moments?

MDS: My best moments seem to me like I am a name-dropping braggart: we opened for the Ramones three times, the Clash, Iggy Pop, the Cramps, we opened for that guy from Gun Club, the Dead Boys, jammed with Johnny Thunders and Syl Sylvain on two different New Year's Eves. I solo opened for the Saints. We opened for the Ian Hunter / Mick Ronson band across the Western states - at the Hollywood Palace on the walk of the stars was my fave. Had no bad stage moments to really think of.

AU: What is the situation with your earlier albums and Star Records? Will you be able to re-release them? Do you see a positive result from it?

MDS: At this point, the songs are more important than the albums you refer to, and if we get nothing for them then I couldn't care less if you get them for nothing - if you know what I'm referring to!

AU: Any plans for a new record?

MDS: We got ten great songs we will EVENTUALLY record and release!

AU: What bands are you listening to now?

ON-TERRIBLE

What is it about them that you find the most appealing?

MDS: I'm listening to Dirty Jeans and Sumo Cyco presently along with a few other locals like the Noble Savages - cool, fun, and they feel the feeling!

AU: What can we expect from the Forgotten Rebels in the future?

MDS: Expect more live shows, but not too many.

AU: Anything you'd care to comment about that wasn't touched on?

MDS: My biggest disappointment in this whole thing is that although it's the most fun you can have other than sex, Canada, in general, requires most of its national heroes to have day jobs and be enthusiastic hobbyists if they want to stay their own selves and not be tainted by corporate

direction and intervention.

We may not have become rich but we have made punk history and met punk pioneers... that makes our art all worthwhile, along with the fans!

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Villainizer

Interview by Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: So the five-year reign of terror is finally coming to an end. Can you take a moment to reflect on it all?

Ravioli Villainizer: Yeah, I'm surprised I haven't had my ass kicked yet. There's a lot of things that I can look back on—maybe a few things that I could have done differently, maybe better or worse. But all in all, I'm happy; I'm not much of a man of regrets. I just take things for face value. It's been good, but you just know when things need to come to an end sometimes. It's like when a crowd asks for an encore and you know you just should not play another one so you don't give it to them. Everything's going well for us right now; there's no reason to stop. I'm just choosing to stop.

AU: How do the other members of Villainizer feel about the departure? Was it a mutual agreement or a decision you made on your own?

RV: It was my decision. They're obviously not too thrilled, because things are going so well. I mean, you know we get great slots on great festivals and there are a lot of die-hard fans that buy everything we put out. So things like that all work out really well for us. But the guys have other projects, too. Drew has Death Toll Rising; Tylor as well, he has Tylor Dory Trio. And Josh, the drummer, is even starting a folk metal project. So everyone has other things, it's not like they're going to be sitting idle, twiddling their thumbs, waiting for something to come around. But as far as [the end of] Villainizer goes, they just kind of accepted it for what it was when I gave them the news. There wasn't really much of an uproar.

AU: Five years have passed since Villainizer's inception. How many death threats and pieces of hate mail have you received in that time?

RV: Oh man, all the time! I don't want to over exaggerate and say thousands, but I'd say almost 100 between verbal and actual emails, and letters and job security threats—like almost getting fired from my jobs. Pretty much anybody who I come in contact with either loves it or hates it, and therefore hates me.

AU: As a band that has gained notoriety for your mock terrorist gimmick and focus on racial stereotypes, how do you really feel about the current sociopolitical landscape of North America and what are some issues that hit close to home for you?

RV: To be honest, one of my biggest things is too much over-sensitivity with people. When I started this, it wasn't so much as, 'Oh, we're trying to deliver this message,' as it is just freedom of speech, and my freedom to say whatever I want is your freedom to take it however you want, so I

SHR-EDMONTON

don't really care too much about how you feel. I always believed that actions speak louder than words when it comes to people, so you can say kick sand, rape white women, bomb shit, eat humans—you can say whatever you want but it's a metal band, it doesn't really make a difference. It's artistic expression so it can mean whatever you want it to mean. It's rarely literal. So yeah, I'd say in North America, just people's oversensitivity and all this mob mentality on Facebook and the kind of stupidity it breeds.

AU: Villainizer has built a pretty solid fan base over the last five years. What kind of backlash have you received from hardcore fans regarding the disbanding?

RV: It's been interesting because people are more so just confused and kind of upset. It's like meeting a girl with really pretty hair and then finding out she shaved it all for no reason, or really big boobs and she decided to get a breast reduction. So I think people are just more so confused. They're kind of at the same point my bandmates are at. They're like, 'If everyone is buying your albums, your fan base is spreading, and everything is going well for you guys, why would you want to stop?' And I kind of just have to tell them—it's tough to explain it to them. You kind of explain it to them like you would to little kids. I'm like, 'that's just the way it is.' So it's not really backlash as much as it is confusion: a little mild outcry.

AU: Do you have anything else you'd like to share with Absolute Underground in conclusion of this interview and Villainizer?

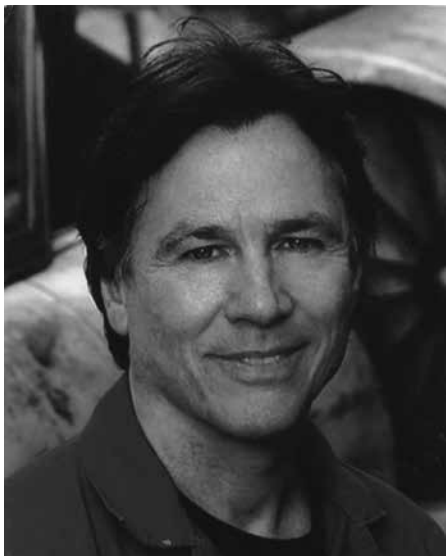
RV: I just want to thank all the people that supported such a goofy, terrible idea from the get-go. But it's ending because I need it to end. That's pretty much all I can say. For my own wellbeing, Villainizer needs to stop forever. No reunion tours, no nothing. That final show—September 11 at the Starlight Room—is going to be the last Villainizer anything.

AU: Do you guys have anything special planned for that final show on September 11?

RV: Just more antics and costumes and things like that—a little bit closer to when we first started out, when we'd jump off stage and switch costumes and keep rolling and all that. I think we're going to put on a little more of a theatrical show than what we normally do, but at the same time it's just going to boil down to getting drunk and having a great time with all our friends. Just make it one last final party.

www.facebook.com/villainizer





The World of Science Fiction, According to Richard Hatch

By Ed Sum

Richard Hatch is more than just an actor these days. In addition, he's a writer, director, producer and a humanitarian. When traveling to pop culture conventions, he sees it as an opportunity to explore the city. He likes to check out the local high schools, colleges and universities, and sometimes a special program may manifest. Usually these pay-for workshops impart his experiences to a new generation. These self-improvement and acting classes he offers are just one of his many projects; people leave knowing the future is bright and there's no need to wear shades.

"I'm interested in helping humanity to grow, to heal and be forgiving," said Hatch. "I like appearing in projects that will touch people's hearts, open their minds and help them move beyond their bias and prejudices."

Hatch believes he's tapped into what's going on

socially and politically. He's concerned about what's ahead and sometimes these concerns manifest in the roles he's played. As Dan Robbins in *Streets of San Francisco*, he was a health food advocate and he enjoyed getting back to nature when not on the job. When contrasted to more recent roles, especially that of Tom Zarek in the re-imagined version of *Battlestar Galactica*, some wondered what sinister past this character had buried. In the web series *The Silicon Assassin*, he's a gangster of sorts. In the upcoming short film *Cowboys & Engines*, he's a farmer-turned-cowboy. In the prelude trailer to *Star Trek: Battle of Axanar*, he's certainly showing his diversity as a philosophical Klingon who just may rival Japanese warlord Katagiri Katsumoto (famous for the battle Seven Spears of Shizugatake) – whom Hatch took inspiration from.

"To me, it comes down to what kind of complex character I get to play. I like characters that are more layered – the more complex the better," he says.

As audiences have discovered in the 2004 *Battlestar Galactica* series, nobody is all good or all bad. These individuals are human beings struggling with demons. There's a dark side within humanity and it can emerge when one least expects it. Win or lose, that's the game being played within this series.

Although the attempted 2009 theatrical film reboot is in limbo due to Glen A. Larson's untimely death, maybe something will happen if Bryan Singer decides to revisit it. But as Hatch revealed, "I don't know what the timeline is or if they have a script everybody likes. That's the big challenge. But I'm hoping they find a way to not only develop it as a movie but also have it cover new ground so it's not the same as the original or re-imagined version. The producers [whoever owns the rights now] have to find a way to go into new territory."

According to the AV Club, screenwriter Jack Paglen (*Transcendence*) still remains attached. In his audio lecture series, "From Here to Infinity: An Explanation of Science Fiction Literature (2006)" scholar Michael D.C. Drout, English and Communication, M.A. (Whedon College) argues

that great science fiction can reveal interesting things about the human condition. Hatch believes the same thing. As an avid reader of science fiction since the age of eight, he's read all the greats and finds "all" of Isaac Asimov's works to be the most influential. Although he does not read as much these days, this futurist tries to keep up.

"What I like most today is the visionary and prophetic material written by authors who look into the possible mysteries of the world," said Hatch. "Especially inspiring are those who look at where we come from and where we are going. Great science fiction does that."

Hatch also enjoys what's popular. A partial list includes *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Harry Potter*, *Game of Thrones* and *Outlander*. To understand why these franchises are appealing to the masses may require looking at Margaret Atwood's treatise in "Maybe In Other Worlds: Science Fiction and the Human Imagination (2012)." Kevin Barry, book reviewer of *The Telegraph*, wrote, "Atwood suspects that the appeal of comic books, sci-fi and the hyperreal lies deep in the human psyche. They satisfy our primal need for myth."

When Hatch reflects on his own work and the programs he's been in, he believes great sci-fi drama has something to say about the world. Just as important, and when possible, he likes to weave world history and mythology into the projects he's involved in. One such passion is his original and ongoing work with *The Great War of Magellan*, which he started a decade ago. He sees this series as a vehicle to explore very deep, complex questions about who we are, tapping into some pretty powerful themes explored in films like *The Matrix*.

This creative mind behind *GWoM* believes that as a species, we will continue to evolve and start to move beyond the superficial, and we will start to see the end of the line. We will understand how Creation works and we will understand our role in it. The spiritual messages he wishes to insert into the narrative will have readers curious as to when new material will come out. In a story of survival about a young boy, Akilian, navigates the ruins of a once mighty empire,

the Confederation of Planets. A war fractured this world; the survivors can't stay divided over trivial issues and have to unite against a new threat. Hatch reveals that a novel should be available next year along with a high-end web series.

"I find any kind of situation where we see cultures clashing to be an interesting insight into the human nature of why we do these things. In the case of *Star Trek: Battle of Axanar*, 'Why do we go to war? What happens in the aftermath of war?'"

Hatch's own work and his role in this latest fan film project both try to address this question. As many veterans will tell a new generation, war is hell. At Island Fantasy Convention, fans can ask this actor about what's next as momentum builds for both projects he's involved with when they go into full production.



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SLUT

By Dani Reese

What happens when the lead singer of a punk band goes hip-hop? You get a crazy, intense passionate expressive mix of power and lyrical genius that will knock your socks clean off! Christoph is the lead singer for Vancouver punk band The Wrecktals, and also a free style hip-hop artist with some very powerful things to say! This article examines his views on the revolutionary idea of "poor man's punk," as coined by Christoph himself.

Writing for Christoph began at a very young age. He first started writing poetry when he was in kindergarten and never stopped. "I was raised by punks, and my earliest music-related memories included not only Rancid, Bad Brains, DOA, SNFU and Dead Kennedys, but Beastie Boys, Cypress Hill, RUN DMC, and so on. I've never really thought about it, but I suppose I've always been into both punk and hip-hop."

He began the challenge of writing lyrical material in a hip-hop-esque beat fashion early in 2012. His journey into the project SLUT was inspired by "punk ethos," says Chris, "...and the ideologies that we must evolve and move forward as a species by abandoning institutionalized traditionalism and fundamentalism, all the while questioning everything. I feel it's hypocritical to keep punk ideals in just punk music. Everyone in our subculture already gets it."

SLUT's message is aimed at everyone. Christoph's goal is to spread awareness for the weird, crazy genre of hip-hop. His other band, The Wrecktals, spans a vast multitude of genres, ranging from punk, ska, hardcore, metal and reggae. They also have been known to incorporate a bit of acoustic folk, psychobilly and doom, as well. Christoph

views these genres as the "freak genres." He is very proud to say that The Wrecktals open people's minds to genres they may have not been familiar with before. "My time with The Wrecktals, has given me a lot of musical and song writing knowledge. I'm applying my skills earned from touring in a DIY hardcore punk band to essentially fuel what I consider "poor man's punk" more than "hip-hop". It's the same lyrical content. It's the same angst and hatred and disgust. It's just to an instrumental musical backdrop that isn't so fucking awkward to perform alone. The Wrecktals are waiting for EPs we recorded to be mixed and mastered, which is taking our poor asses MUCH too long. So I figured in the meantime, since I never stop writing music, I might as well try something new. I'm obsessed with, and good with words. The most lyrical form of music, being hip-hop, seemed like the best choice."

SLUT has received its fair share of support and criticism. It would seem everyone has an opinion about what hip-hop should be, but Chris really doesn't care, he's out to make music he would listen to and he hopes it will resonate with people. "It's time to evolve the sound, and get the message and the heart and the angst into other places. I want to invade other genres of music and make them start questioning everything about themselves and the lives they live." He is happy to report he is able to, it seems, hit a wider audience than he could with his hardcore punk band. He feels he is able to freely express opinions and thoughts he doesn't see popping up in many other genres. "The themes are common, but the playing field is new territory" says Chris. "It is my intention to make people think. I don't care whose ears my music ends up hitting, as long as it makes

someone feel or think. I would rather impact the life of one person than be the background music to one million."

Chris sees his sound as a bit more poetic and mellow. His plans for this upcoming year are to revolutionize that sound and turn it into more of a pissed-off, violent, abrasive, angsty sound. "I am currently releasing my independent, crowd-source-success EP called *Centerfolds*, and as long as everything goes according to plan, physical copies should be in the hands of everyone by March. You can download it all for free from <http://www.punkerslut.bandcamp.com> in the meantime, though. If you would like to hear

the more aggressive, abrasive hardcore-inspired stuff that I intend on release early-mid 2013 (also for free), check out the channel "Sonofapunk" on YouTube. I post my work as I make it, so you can check out all the demos for the next release on there. I will be doing a huge EP release party sometime in the early new year for *Centerfolds* here in Vancouver, and I intend on gigging a lot in 2013, and maybe busting out a Western Canadian tour or two."

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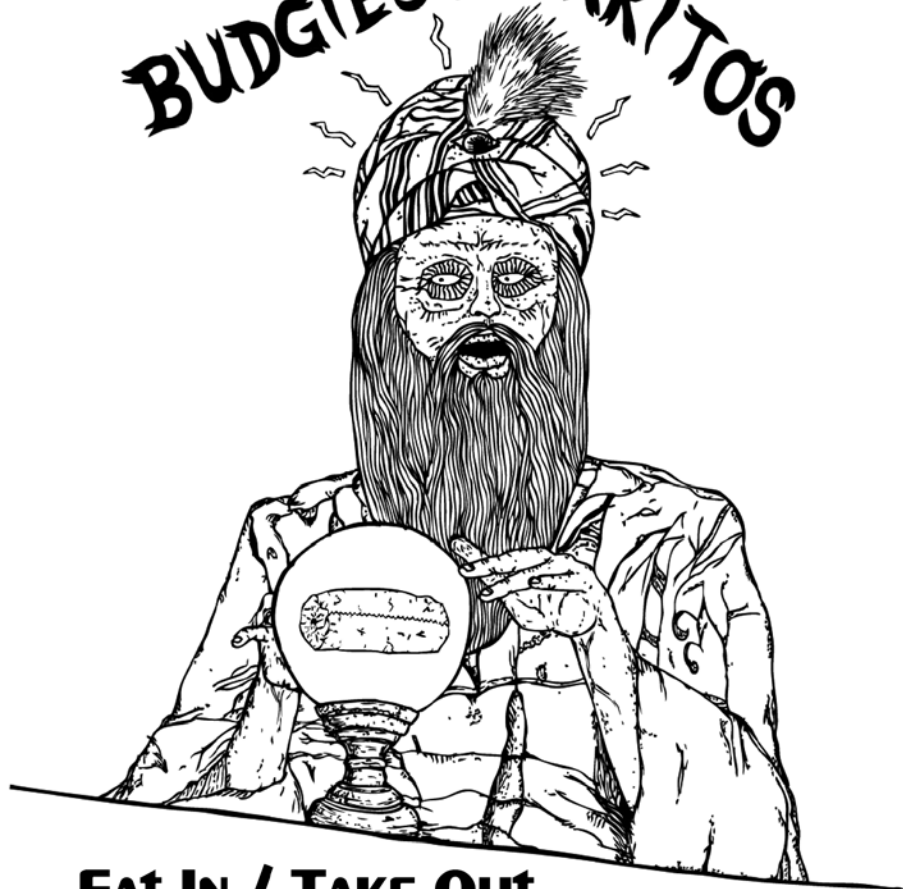
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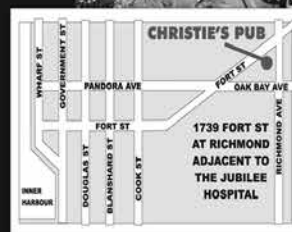
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Iron Reagan

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Where are you phoning from now, Mr. Phil?

LP: In Richmond now, practicing and getting ready for the tour, we go out at the end of the month. That butts up against the Iron Reagan tour with The Black Dahlia Murder and Harms Way. I'm looking forward to getting out there.

AU: Let's start at the start, how did your band name come about? Do you guys want to invade Soviet Russia or something?

LP: It was Tony's brainchild, he was the one who came up with Iron Reagan. It sounded really good and had a ring to it, it had the vibe we were going for. And it just stuck. It doesn't really have a deep meaning other than it is a cool name that sounded good. Now we have been traveling with it, we're happy with it.

AU: It could be political, you have the ability to take political directions with lyrics.

LP: It opens us up to a lot of different themes of course, as far as lyrics are concerned. It's cool to go in a new direction compared to our other bands.

AU: What antics do you get up to while on tour,

when you interact with the other bands?

LP: We've been touring like crazy for the past three years, we've played about 250 shows a year and this one is stacking up to be very heavy. We definitely like to smoke weed and drink and hang out with bands. One story that jumps out is getting the opportunity to tour with GWAR on the last tour with Dave still alive. We did a full-on six weeks with GWAR and that by far was one of the craziest tours for partying. We started calling Dave Brockie "The Living Skull." For some reason, he took to putting on a black ski mask everyday and take his shirt off. He would party his ass off while we were on stage. He would approach from the side of the stage with whatever bottle of whiskey he could find, and between songs he would hurl the bottle at us and we had to be ready to catch whatever projectile he was sending our way. He would do it night after night after night. So we wrote a song about the chaos of "The Living Skull."

AU: So he is football tossing a whiskey bottle at you when you're playing guitar? What if you get beamed by it?

LP: He would wait 'til the last note and you'd look over and make sure there wasn't a bottle of whiskey flying above your head. It became a thing we got used to.

AU: How do you differentiate between writing for all the bands you are involved in? What is your musical vision for Iron Reagan versus say Cannabis Corpse or Six Feet Under?

LP: With each of those bands, I have different cooks in the kitchen. I work with different musicians in each band and those different brains create different music, you know?

AU: What would you say is the song that gets the best crowd response when touring?

LP: I wouldn't say anyone listens to us and goes, "The message in that song is the greatest," but I feel like there are a couple songs that really connect because of the riffs and lyrics. We did one called "Miserable Failure," and flew out to Portland and shot with the director Whitey McConaughy. We also worked with a band called Red Fang and did this "flash mosh," and we did this thing where mosh pits would break out by surprise in a coffee shop or a public park, a bookstore. The video is



really funny and it's one of the best ones I've done to date.

AU: You're buddies with Chad, our art master for the magazine, you guys met up and went to Wrestlemania. Do you find you've got a favourite wrestler in the WWE that you follow?

LP: Okay, now you're hitting a bees' nest with the wrestling questions!

AU: I've got the bat, I'm swinging...

LP: I'm a huge wrestling mark, I'm turbo into it. I love WWE, love Ring of Honour and all that stuff. Like you said, Chad and I saw Wrestlemania this year and saw Brock Lesnar put the boots to Roman Reigns, then Seth Rollins came in with money in the bank. But your question is, who is my favourite wrestler right now? Now, I think the most talented wrestler out there is a guy called Adrian Neville. He goes by Neville in WWE. A close second would be Kalisto, he is in the The Lucha Dragons clique and a high flyer. Their athleticism in the ring and what they can do is just so amazing and you know it's a pleasure to see them do their thing. I'm going to Summer Slam in a couple of weeks and the card hasn't even been written yet for that show, they've got maybe one match in the books and they want it to be a four hour show. I'm wondering how they fill that four hours! They've got two weeks to come up with some really good matches. They've had many stars get injured recently, Ryback got some condition, and Cena got his nose broke,

and Daniel Bryan is out. It will be interesting to see how WWE will make that card as stacked as Summer Slam needs to be.

As far as me and Chad it's hard to pinpoint the exact moment when him and I met. It's been a couple years. Every time I come through I see him, we've hung out all over the world. He has traveled with CC on our last tour through California, and I gotta shout out to Danika his girl, she is a huge wrestling fan. She kicks ass! She works out and all that. She needs to join WWE. She could kick the shit out of Paige!

AU: Maybe in the future we can see Iron Reagan face off in a tag team band slam versus another band, a little of music, a little of wrestling... maybe you could fight Havok?

LP: It's easy to get us into the ring, but the match would suck. We just get in there and start bumping into each other like the Three Stooges. I'm pretty sure my leg would snap in half if I jumped off the top rope.

AU: Last words to rep the Reagan?

LP: Look for *Charity Of Will*, our latest on Relapse Records, and we're gonna be coming through Canada with Black Dahlia Murder, so look out for us!

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CANNABIS CORPSE

Cannabis Corpse

Interview by Erik Lindholm

Land Phil is a musician of talent and humour, criss-crossing the world with metal bands of all descriptions, kicking it with different crews and playing all kinds of instruments. Here, he extols the ways of the weed and describes a smoky life on tour in many bands at once.

Absolute Underground: Hello out there, who are you and where are you?

LP: I'm Land Phil, bass and vocals with Cannabis Corpse, bass for Municipal Waste and guitar for Iron Reagan. I've been touring for the better part of 10 years.

AU: You're rolling with Cannabis Corpse right now?

LP: I just got back from a five-week tour in Europe

with Iron Reagan, we went out there and it was the first time the band had been in Europe. We hit the festivals – Hellfest, Resurrection Fest – had the opportunity to play in front of thousands of people and really had a good time; one show was with Motorhead. The guitar and bass player in Iron Reagan had never been, it was their first time ever, so it was fun to experience it with them and shred it up for all the thrashers there.

AU: Do you feel like the old hand, taking the young touring virgins out – telling them what foods to eat and what girls to play with and so on?

LP: Well a little bit, there is a certain level of paternal instinct I feel towards those cats. But you know, they are grown-ass men, they know how to behave and handle their booze.

AU: Are you getting active with Cannabis Corpse now?

LP: Right now I'm taking this month to rehearse with Cannabis Corpse and get set to go out for a

month-long trip with Revocation, Black Breath and Archspire. We are doing a full US run with some dates in Canada. Yeah, getting back into the saddle. I'm glad I have a couple of weeks to go from one band to the other, it takes a while to get used to playing those songs again. CC is definitely the most difficult as far as what I have to play onstage. It's like getting ready for a fight or something,



the rehearsals.

AU: There is Alex Webster inspiration in your playing, and it sounds like a workout.

LP: Alex is one of my biggest influences, when I was younger, me and my brother would spend a lot of time on the couch smoking weed and watching Cannibal Corpse videos. Watching Alex, and that band, was a lot of the reason why I got into heavy music and wanted to play extreme stuff. I've told him before that Cannabis Corpse is my tribute to him and the band. We are trying to emulate some of the things they do, and we are also trying to write original death metal.

AU: It's a challenge to write originals. You guys are doing a unique thing by focusing on marijuana versus the standard zombies and axe-murders of typical death metal. Could you speak a bit on marijuana culture in the States? We are seeing legalization take hold in Colorado, Washington and California. What is your pulse on marijuana culture in the United States right now?

LP: I can see that [the States] is making big moves towards legalization countrywide. I can see a couple of pockets of the States that will never legalize weed ever and I live in one of them. I don't think Virginia will ever legalize weed, even though Washington, DC has, and that is about hour and half from where I live. Also, Texas and Nevada and Arizona – I doubt they will. But you never know, I hope so. It's fun to go to those States where it is legal and buy weed in stores, I don't get to do that every day. You go up to Seattle, and it's everywhere. Basically it is not hard to find weed in the States, it's everywhere. Just like Canada, weed is pouring out of the walls in Canada, it's everywhere. It's a plant.

AU: You were heavily involved with Chris Barnes on Six Feet Under's latest record, Crypt of the Devil, Chris of course being the original

singer for Cannibal Corpse. You acted as a backing band for Chris for the record, how did that come about and get involved?

LP: That was a project that came out of the blue but as soon as it came up, I jumped on it because the chance to work with Chris Barnes for an entire record was so amazing. We had worked together on the Cannibals record, from *Wisdom To Baked*, and we did the one song "Individual Pot Patterns," and after that he wrote me and asked if I wanted to contribute to the new Six Feet Under record. So I sent him four songs and he wrote me back and said he liked the songs. So I said, "Let me write and record the whole record... I can do it, I can produce the whole thing myself, I can take the helm on the whole project." And he said, "Absolutely, go for it." I started writing and recording with my brother. We did it just like a Cannabis record; basically, we work one-on-one and once the album was finished, Chris put the vocals on it. The fact it even happened was so great. Of course, I'm a huge fan of Chris' work with Corpse and Six Feet Under. I tried to combine everything I love of his music, and put it into that record. I hope that love comes across in the album.

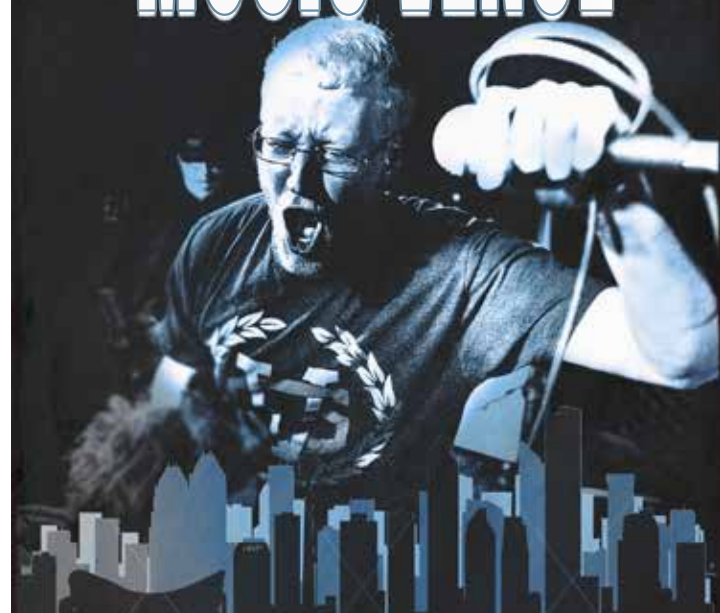
AU: It sounds great, it fits into the Six Feet Under catalog. It's amazing you could find that level of interaction writing in a different area and sending it to him. What happens next, do you intend to tour as Six Feet Under?

LP: He still has the band that has been jamming with him for a while, the drummer being Lord Marco and the bass player Jeff Hughell. I wasn't planning on taking over, I just wanted to write the album and work with Chris on more than just one song, because of what a big fan I am.

AU: It's wicked you got the opportunity. It seems you have a full day-timer already with the bands you have.

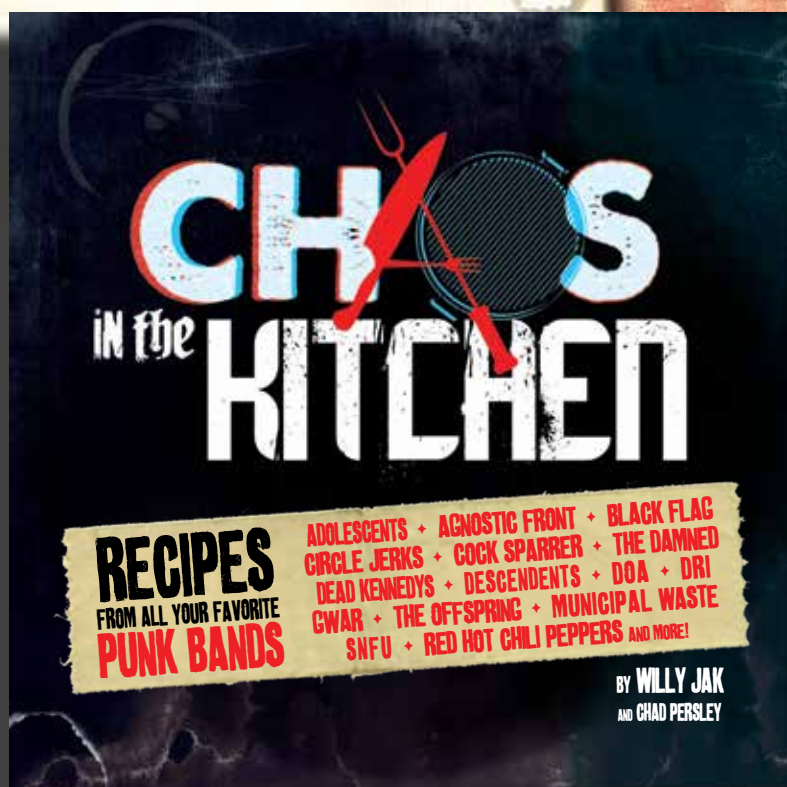
LP: I mean, with that album, I was touring very

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heavily at the time with Iron Reagan, and I had just enough time to hash out the demos and send them to Chris, who then approved, and then I went back to recording them fully. Josh Hellhammer, my brother who plays drums in CC, he's a good recording engineer, and while I was on tour he was recording the drum tracks himself at the practice space at home. I can write a song and demo the riffs, and give it to him and trust he'll get it done. He'll send mixes every day of what he's working on. Even though I'm on the road we can still produce music.

AU: It's phenomenal... innovative. My mind's image of bands writing music is four dudes plugging away in a basement with a four-track... I guess that is previous decades, now we have MP3s and the internet to piece it together.

LP: Yeah, there is technology available for band members to jam together on the internet, while in different places. You can plug your instrument into the computer and it brings up emulators and you can all be sitting in front of your computers, jamming together – amazing, ya know? Sometimes musicians you want to work with don't live in your town. Having this available brings a lot of interesting projects to the surface. Don't let geography stop you.

AU: On the last CC tour, did you smoke up another band? Is there a band you would consider to be skilled technicians of the marijuana?

LP: Well, I'll tell you the heaviest smoker I've ever toured with is Chris Barnes. We did a run with SFU, and he was by far the most pot smokingest monster I've ever experienced. He had a bowl shaped like a knife you could smoke out of, and that tour was were we got to know each other. A lot of bong sessions on the bus with Barnes. On the whole, there are a plethora of bands on the scene – weed and metal are hand in hand.

AU: Speaking of touring and weed, what is your favourite munchie food on tour?

LP: For me, it depends what coast you are on. If you are East Coast, you're going to hit up Waffle House in the morning. On the West, In-And-Out Burger. The best chain out there right now – Five Guys Burgers. You gotta try them out.

AU: Any good weed-related tour stories?

LP: Well, I want to tell two funny pot stories that jumped into my mind of being on tour. Sometimes when you are tour and you cross the Canadian border, you have to get rid of all your weed. Whenever you get back to the American side, we are looking for someone to sell us weed. One time, we crossed over and were in Seattle, parked getting something to eat. And I see a guy riding his bike down the street. And we are sitting in the van, and I see he has a "Cowboys From Hell" tattoo on his neck. As he rides by I say, "Where's the weed at?" And without even saying anything, he stops, puts his bike by the

wall and comes over. He is like, "I've got White Whale, Hindu Kush, this and that," he has it all. He says, "Y'all in a band? I'm in a band, too. It's called Murderbox, and we played with Boneshaker last week." I'm like, "Holy shit! Murderbox!" And he asks how much I want. I reply an eighth. He pulls out this mini-coffin and hands it to me, and I open it up and it's full of weed.

Another time, we were in Texas of all places and been driving for 12 hours through an ice storm and we didn't have any weed. We stopped to get something to eat. I order my food, turn around, and see these two hilariously high guys, their eyes are pink. They looked exactly like Toe Jam and Earl, remember that old game? They were the human versions! As soon as I saw them, I was like, "Where's the weed at?" And they were like, "Please, come this way." We go outside to their car, they had a blowtorch system in the car, and we smoked it out and they sold me the weed. Those are my two stories.

AU: Last words to Canadian metalheads?

LP: Last words for the fans, keep smoking that herb and we'll be there in September, come out to the show and say what's up!

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Dallas Cruz

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself!

Dallas Cruz: I always figured I was in the wrong era, I would feel more comfortable in the 40s and 50s. However, now that I've found my passion, tattooing, this era ain't so fucking bad. I love what I do and I'm stoked on life. Hi I'm Dallas Cruz, a tattoo artist in Chilliwack, B.C. When I'm not inking, you can find me riding through B.C. on my Harley, gardening at my cabin, hunting, or working on my model railroad.

AU: How did you get started tattooing?

DC: I didn't get into tattooing until my mid thirties, later than most. After high school, I went to school for graphic design and computer animation. I spent about seven

everything I could find on the internet about the art. Soon I was charging \$40 an hour, then \$80. After about a year, I reached out to some local shops and started working from the shops. Seven years later, I'm here working at Scarecrow Ink, in Chilliwack, B.C.

AU: How would you describe the shop?

DC: The shop is awesome! The guys I work with are my family and we have a real exciting and

being able to be creative and permanently putting your art on someone, it doesn't get much cooler than that.

AU: What styles does you specialize in?

DC: Portraits and realism.

AU: What makes your tattoos unique?

DC: Detail, I try and get as much detail as I can in my tattoos. I love pushing new ideas and pushing myself to always outdo my last piece.

AU: Do you work in other artforms as well, like painting or airbrush?

DC: I work with graphite and charcoal. This winter I'm going to do more acrylic work.

AU: What is your ultimate goal as an artist?

DC: World domination!

AU: Any advice for new tattoo artists just starting out?

DC: Sounds cliché, but never give fucking up! Ever!

AU: What types of music do you listen to when tattooing?

DC: Mike Ness, give me some fucking Social Distortion.

AU: What can you tell us that your mother doesn't even know about you?

DC: I want to fuck Gidget from the



Rescue Rangers.

AU: Plans for the future?

DC: I want to buy a trailer and live like a vagabond in the desert, riding my Harley and operating an anti-government radio station in my bunker beneath my trailer.

AU: Final words for people reading this?

DC: Fuck the world! Do it your way!

www.dallascruz.com
www.scarecrowink.ca



outgoing vibe here. The owners are awesome guys and give us so much freedom to be creative with everything here. I take a lot of pride in the shop and am proud to represent it. Unlike a lot of tattoo shops that are dark and shady, Scarecrow is bright and roomy with a very friendly atmosphere.

AU: What do you like most about tattooing?

DC: I love the freedom of not having to answer to a "boss" and punch a time clock everyday. Meeting new rad people and crazy weird people every day is fun, and you hear some pretty entertaining gossip, but it's really the art. I mean,



years behind a computer working design jobs both in B.C. and Alberta. I never really enjoyed it unless I was working on my own projects. After becoming burnt out from the computer industry, I drifted from job to job. I hated trades and hated getting dirty, After being let go from a glass company for having a bad work attitude, I realized I had to change my life. I couldn't wake up every morning hating my job. I decided I was going to give tattooing a go. I have been drawing since I was in diapers and was always getting tattooed. I didn't get into tattooing with an apprenticeship and became what is frowned upon in the industry as a "scratcher." Surfing *Craigslist*, I came across a tattoo kit bought it for \$300 and realized later I was ripped off. I ended up purchasing new machines, ink and a power supply because the thrones in the kit were Chinese pieces of shit. I started working on my friends and reading



Absolute Album Reviews

Hi Kommand – Vanguard
Self-Released



Dualism comes to mind when listening to this record... we wander through a field of walking basslines, followed by falling power chords; raspy shouted male vocals to soaring female melody lines. Loud and quiet find interplay with songs both gritty and polished. Listeners will find elements of nineties grunge, classic seventies rock, psychedelia, and jazz. The vocals deliberately stand on top of the mix throughout, and shine expressively. The lyrics find metaphors to discuss environmental destruction, love found and lost, exploration and addiction. The case for dualism is made most strongly with "Slippin' Away" into "Smiling at Me" as a two-song punch: the first describing descent into addiction and the difficulty of holding on to a partner lost in the throes of substance "...you are slippin' away/ rig rolling home..."; the second, a happy lover joyful to become a wife. Could it be the same couple? At the end of the record, the now familiar omnipresent

voices leave you with a sense you've lived and absorbed their stories: hopefully, we learn from them.

-Erik Lindholm

Gruesome – Savage Land
Relapse Records

One could hardly object to the notion that Chuck Schuldiner's gnarly and defiant, yet sophisticated and socially conscious brainchild basically spearheaded "death metal" before the term even came to realization. It goes without saying that Death and fellow pioneers of the inaugural 80s death metal wave—Massacre, Obituary, Possessed, etc—inspired a monumental megalith of faster, heavier, progressively polished music that would, in turn, evolve and eventually branch off into countless subgenres spanning the boundless gamut of heavy metal. One of the fundamental principles



of true artistry (regardless of medium or era) is the common act of borrowing from and paying homage to the greats of days past. So it was really only a matter of time until someone stepped up to deliver a genuinely sincere—and shamelessly blatant—love letter to the introductory years of a band that influenced so many subsequent generations of heavy music.

Exhumed front-man and former Death to All Tour figurehead Matt Harvey not only showcases his pulverizing guitar proficiency and vicious vocal abilities on *Savage Land*, the highly anticipated debut release from Gruesome, he essentially exhibits his die-hard devotion to the Florida-founded forefathers of death metal. Right off the bat, Harvey—being the intelligent and adept musician, writer and enthusiast that he is—knew that the key to delivering a meticulously orchestrated and wholly authentic tribute to early-era Death (*Scream Bloody Gore*, *Leprosy*) was to assemble a super-group of equally passionate and accomplished metal luminaries who were thoroughly

versed in and appreciative of Schuldiner's vision and methodology. Gruesome's radical roster is comprised of guitarist Daniel Gonzales (Occisas, Possessed), drummer Gus Rios (Evil Amidst, Upon Infliction, ex-Malevolent Creation), bassist Robin Mazen (Castrator, Derketa, Precipice), and Harvey himself taking on guitar and vocal duties.

To say that this beastly quartet absolutely nailed what they set out to achieve with *Savage Land* would be a severe understatement. As a complete package, Gruesome's intricately structured and relentlessly rambunctious riffs, frenetic yet flawless tonal variations, and hideously horrific lyrical content cloaked in brazen Death-worshipping song titles like "Gangrene" and "Closed Casket" is a blistering bombshell that shadows the monstrous magnum opus of Death's initiatory epoch. Juxtaposed with Mazen's bestial, brooding bass lines, the searing shrieks of Harvey's and Gonzales' guitar strings are agonized and inhuman. Rios' pristine percussion prowess is pulsating and pervasive. The sonic savagery that *Savage Land* inflicts upon listeners is the aural equivalent of the degrading decay of flesh eating disease: an inescapable, unfathomable torturous strain of audible terror.

Whether Harvey and his fellow *Savage Land* voyagers endeavor to trek forward in a journey to further explore and pay their respects to the diverse discography of Death is yet to be known. But one thing can be certain: the old-school brutality of definitive 80s death metal has been exhumed from the eternal depths of obscurity, and its undead corpse is looking Gruesome as fuck.

- Lacey Paige

Absolute Live Reviews

Bolt Thrower
Hellshock
Baptists
June 21st, Rickshaw Theatre
Vancouver, BC

It was a last-minute mission to find a ticket to a deservedly sold-out show – I owe Jesse from Edmonton – that entry was gained to this rare sight of a British monster. The night started at the Cambie Gastown bar, the crowd milling preshow. Mr. Chi Pig joined, and hoisted a few shots with us. The preshow lasted too long and by the time we entered the Rickshaw, Baptists had finished. Hellshock did not disappoint! A nod to early punk touring mates, Bolt Thrower had chosen the Portland band to warm the crowds for their three Canadian dates. It was a good time, yet the crowd was super reserved at this point... all energies were being saved. Finally the "Battle of Britain" theme hits the PA and BT takes the stage. It is an assault of low riffs, midpaced double-bass drums, and strong lyrical tales of battles fought, lands

conquered, victories achieved! It's exactly what you expected. The band is perfectly on point, doesn't miss a note, and crowd response is bananas on the legendary riffs. Personal fave was "When Cannons Fade" on the encore. Hats off to BT and crew; they flew from England to play three small shows - ticket price \$25 at the Vancouver one – they ain't getting rich on this. It's about the music, and to share it with fans. Where next to conquer?

- Erik Lindholm

Devil In The Woodshack
Wheelhouse Brewery
29 May 2015
Prince Rupert, BC

Travelling with work brought us to sunny Rupert, after hitting local bookstore Eddie's News and walking home with an armful of magazines – music and revellers come spilling out of what appears to be a crusty garage. After investigation, it is full of rocking people, it's a brewery, and East Vancouver's Devil In The

Woodshack are playing later in the night. We are there! Hoist some choice IPA and before you know it, Devil is rip-roaring through a blend of outlaw country and gypsy folk songs that is the perfect blend for latenight brewery smash. Exploring punk, quiet ballads, and ripping 50-ish rock, they put on an energetic, sold-out show that captivated and got people twisting and spilling brew. They played a wide variety of songs and, by the second chorus of each song, it seemed the patrons had the lyrics down and were singing the melodies right back at them. The venue couldn't have fit the band better, with vintage block and tackle, old wood crates and huge beams framing the stage... this was the woodshed, they were the devils.

- Erik Lindholm



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Absolute Film Reviews



Collar
Unearthed Films

Hanger is my favourite film by Canadian filmmaker Ryan Nicholson. It has everything a hardcore horror fan could want: tons of blood, practical effects, lots of boobs and some great humour. When I first saw *Hanger* in the cinema, I was floored by how far past the envelope Ryan pushed the genre; to this day there aren't many (if any) other films that have done what that film did. Recently, I picked up *Collar*, from Ryan himself, and I was amazed that this film is just as depraved and raunchy as *Hanger*. I loved it! *Collar*, like *Hanger*, is filled with incredibly gory practical effects, showcasing Ryan's unique ability to create this bizarre world that his films live in. But, also like *Hanger*, there are some very intense rape scenes that I should warn you about beforehand. Ryan's films are not for the squeamish or faint of heart. They are full of extreme, sometimes very explicit sexuality, and most casual movie watchers might not have the stomach for it. That being said, if you're like me and you enjoy very fucked-up exploitation films, then *Collar* is perfect for you. Nick Principe (*Laid To Rest*) stars as Massive, the homeless derelict who likes to rape prostitutes and murder anyone that happens to get in his way. Two low-life hipster teenagers, with visions of internet stardom, stumble upon Massive abusing another victim and decide to record it so they can share it online. After witnessing the crime they begin to lead more victims into Massive's lair, hoping to catch it all on film, until they realize they might be the only two capable of stopping this madman. Two unlucky police officers are next to fall prey to the giant homeless killer, but instead of just raping and killing the female officer, played by Aidan Dee (*Hanger*, *Gutterballs 2*), he decides to keep her tied up in his shack for further use. The hipsters and lone cop must take on Massive before there's no one left

for him to kill. This is a messed up film and I can't stress enough that there is some content that shouldn't be viewed by anyone who isn't accustomed to this sort of cinema. On the flipside, I absolutely loved *Collar* and after *Hanger* it comes in second as Ryan's best film, in my opinion. I also want to add that Mackenzie Murdock from *Father's Day* (Astron-6) plays one of the Johns of the surviving rape victim. Overall, I think this is some of Ryan's best work and I can't give it enough praise!

- Cody No Teeth

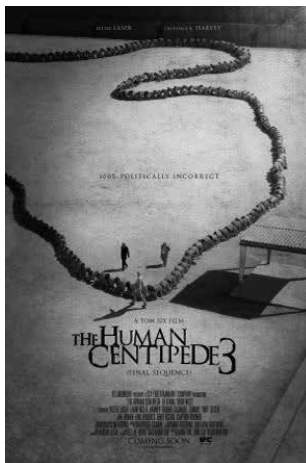
go-pro cameras that give the film a very claustrophobic feel. This portion of the film gets dark. I mean really dark! The first half is very funny and somewhat upbeat compared to the second half. Some twisted and horrible shit takes place. There are still some funny moments, and Ryan narrating the events taking place gives it an almost surreal setting, but don't get me wrong, there are some very extreme visuals that might be hard to sit through. In fact, when we sat down to watch this film with a crowd, an entire row of patrons got up and left during the second half of the feature. You can either take that as a sign that this film isn't for you or you can take it as a sign that you should hunt down this film by any means. I, for one, love all of Ryan's films and I enjoyed every moment of his newest picture. I don't get squeamish from gore set pieces, nor do I bat an eye to most explicit content in film, unless it contains animal cruelty. I enjoy watching Ryan's hard work come to fruition and this film definitely showcases some of his best stuff.

That being said, it also has very disturbing images that might not agree with some people, so I'm warning you before you go into *GB2*, be prepared. On that note, I also want to mention that long-time Burning Moon Video and Night Terrors Film Society supporter Turner Stewart is responsible for the cinematography in the later half of the film. Megan Nicholson (Ryan's wife) is the executive producer of the film and Aidan Dee from *Hanger* and *Collar* stars as the sister being stalked by the masked killer BBK. I thoroughly enjoyed

GB2 and especially loved the WTF moment halfway through. This is a strong entry into Ryan's outstanding filmography and should be seen by all genre cinephiles out there.

- Cody No Teeth

Nothing Left Unstitched in The Human Centipede 3: (Final Sequence)
From the bowels of a hot Texas prison comes the third and final instalment of Tom Six's infamous *Human Centipede* trilogy, *The Human Centipede 3: (Final Sequence)*. If you are a fan of the first two Centipede films, you'll fall mouth-to-ass with this one. If you're not a fan of the first two, or even if you haven't seen them, this film is still digestible. That's the beauty of Six's trilogy—three solid films that work well stitched together, but can also be pulled apart and appreciated on



their own. *The Final Sequence* is not for the squeamish, but it is also not as dark as the first two. Although the film easily tips the gore scale, this one is even more of a black comedy than the previous. If you're into completely disgusting, nihilistic gore fests that make you bust your guts with laughter, then grab your diapers, fasten your bibs and get ready for the messy, glorious feast that is *The Human Centipede 3!*

In this grand finale, lunatic prison warden Bill Boss (Dieter Laser, *The Human Centipede*) and his flunky accountant, Dwight Butler, (Lawrence R Harvey, *The Human Centipede 2: Full Sequence*) are in danger of losing their jobs, and need to come up with a plan of action. Boss' torture tactics, though fun to watch, get him nowhere—no respect from the inmates, nor the Governor (Eric Roberts, in a smaller role than expected) who threatens to terminate all in charge if things don't change. In turn, a resolution is made that might not only help the two keep their jobs, but also deter future violent offenders: "the world's first human prison centipede." The film suggests that this centipede is a better alternative to the current US prison system, and it may just be.

Following suit with *The Human Centipede 2*, the idea of stitching people together mouth-to-ass comes from the films themselves. This metafictional element is incredibly smart and works well in both the second and third films. A welcome addition to the *Final Sequence* is Tom Six appearing as himself. Six gives Bill Boss permission to perform the operations on one condition—he gets to see the whole thing through. Amusingly, Six himself can't stomach Boss' gruesome plan and heads for the hills after witnessing the brutality.

What some fans might find off-putting is the fact that you don't see a human centipede until well over half way through the movie; whereas, the first two films seem to cannonball into the concept early on. Luckily, up until the stitches are sewn, the film carries its weight in comedy and gore, and the audience gets small glimpses at the earlier films, as a teaser of sorts, which successfully refreshes the memories of those who watched the previous films and sets the stage for those who haven't.

It's interesting to note the visual contrast from one film to the next in the trilogy. The first film uses cool blue tones to create its chilly, clinical feel, suiting the mad doctor's cold and misanthropic attitude. The second chapter is darker, literally and figuratively, and happens to be filmed entirely in black and white. Toning down the blood, guts and shit somehow adds creep factor, and also reflects the protagonist's bleak and dispiriting nature. The third film is vastly different from the previous; its sun-drenched oranges and yellows create a lighter atmosphere and the Texas heat makes the characters eccentric, particularly Bill Boss. While all three films are black comedies, this third and final chapter is more transparently so. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you might

lost inside Six's world, no matter how dark and sadistic. The *Centipede* films are playful and humorous, and not only encourage us to laugh at the ridiculous state of the world, but also ourselves.

- Kenna Rae

Man, Pride and Vengeance Blue Underground

Franco Nero (*Django*) stars in this not-quite spaghetti western from director Luigi Bazzoni (*The Fifth Cord*). *Man, Pride and Vengeance* aka *With Django Comes Death* isn't like most other Italian-made westerns, in the fact that it takes place in Europe and not North America. The main plot follows the two main characters, Jose, played by Nero, and Carmen, played by Tina Aumont (*Torso*), as

they try to make enough money to flee Europe and start over in the new world. Jose, a soldier, falls deeply in love with Carmen, a local woman, and after killing his superior officer they both disappear into the wilderness where they become outlaws. They come up with a plan to rob a stage coach, which should be carrying enough gold to allow them to escape Europe forever. The first half of the film is kind of a slow burn while Jose and Carmen fall in and out of love with each other until they are forced to leave the city and head out into the wild. At



even hurl.

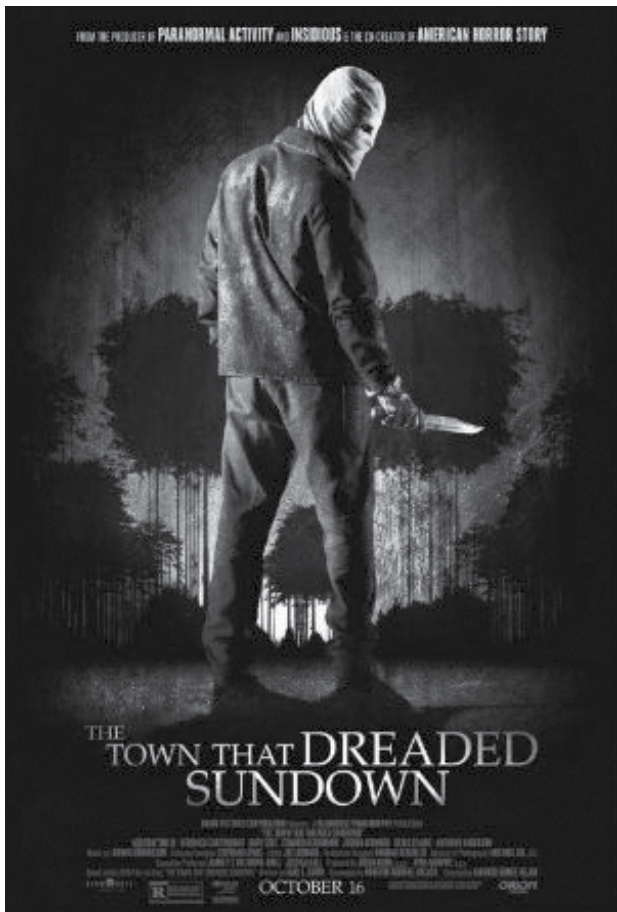
As far as acting goes, the *Final Sequence* is, hands down, the Dieter Laser show. Such a strong, ferocious performance cannot be recalled in recent years. For this horror fan, Laser was unknown until the first *Centipede* film, and while that was also a stellar performance, his role as Bill Boss in this *Final Sequence* is off the hook. Whether staggering around drunk, belting out ridiculous obscenities, chewing on dried clitorises to gain "unbelievable strength," dancing around while inflicting excruciating pain on inmates, or degrading his "office slut," this character will have you in stitches because he is so damn funny. Particularly entertaining is the way Boss' character makes wisecracks about the *Centipede* films; he even refers to Six as a "poop-infatuated toddler."

It takes a certain type of filmgoer to appreciate the *Centipede* trilogy. Although these films aren't stereotypical horror films, fans of the genre tend to flock to them because they appeal to that side that despises the norm and craves something different. In the words of Tom Six himself, "*The Human Centipede* trilogy oozes misanthropy, nihilism and non-conformism. All characteristics of my decadent worldview." It's fun getting

this point, the film moves into the more familiar western atmosphere that the audience should be used to. Franco Nero has to battle against the outlaws he's forced to work with, as well as his own inner demons, all the while making a decision on whether he should leave Europe or stay as a fugitive. This is a very interesting take on the Italian-made westerns that came out in the 60s. The whole reason Italy started to make "spaghetti westerns" was to capitalize on the North American outlaw, as well as jump start their own film industry. So, for Luigi to stray very far from the proven formula was extremely risky. Of course, having Franco Nero star alongside Tina Aumont instantly gave this film an audience in Europe as well as overseas. The only downside to this film is the slow burn at the beginning. It's not a deal breaker, by any means, but it does take a while for the actual "western" part of the film to start. There are some great supplements Blue Underground has included on the disk, as well as the great transfer of the film to Blu-Ray. I would recommend this to any Franco Nero fan, or anyone who's like me and loves collecting these little gems that come out of Italy.

- Cody No Teeth





The Town that Dreaded Sundown Replays an Old Reel (2014): A Movie Review

A new slasher is set to release this summer. The horror film is titled *The Town that Dreaded Sundown*. Astute horror film fans will realize that this is the second film to be based on the Moonlight Murders. In 1946, a serial killer stalked the local lovers of Texarkana. He killed eight and assaulted several more. He was never caught. In the latest version of *The Town that Dreaded Sundown*, writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (*American Horror Story*) tries to bring some fictional closure to the events, which took place over sixty-nine years ago. Though, the real life murders are more horrifying than the ones shown here. This latest film is an homage to the 1976 original film; but it lacks any real terror.

Just as background, the Phantom Killer stalked several known romantic meeting places. He would target couples in the midst of a sexual embrace and he would intervene with a gun. Described by psychologists as a sadist, he would often kill both people and/or rape the woman (sometimes with a Colt .32). His initial attacks were pulled off with less zeal, leading to the escape of Jimmy Hollis and Mary Jeanne Larey. He would quickly become more experienced and more bloodthirsty. Over the course of several weeks, he would kill eight people and attack a total of fifteen. His modus operandi would be repeated on backroads, until he shifted to farmhouses, as the police and Texas Rangers closed

in. It is believed that he moved onto another community, once the limelight became too bright.

The film develops somewhat differently. Jami (Addison Timlin) is the target of the film, throughout the runtime. The killer has a fascination with her, which diverges from the actual events. In the film she must uncover the killer's identity, so that she can find safety and redemption for her murdered boyfriend. In conjunction with the local law enforcement, she delves into the original 1946 murders, but finds few clues. She quickly overcomes the death of boyfriend Corey (Spencer Treat Clark) at the killer's hand and finds new love. Meanwhile, couples are being killed in hotel rooms and in remote locations. A farmhouse stalk and chase series of linked scenes is the only sequence that shows any energy or offers any surprises. Even Jami manages to cruise through the film without much harm.

Simply, this latest film is an homage to the earlier 1976 version. Intertitles state that the film is taking place between Halloween and Christmas of 2013. Yet, the characters wear 70s garb and costumes. Phones and furniture look of this earlier era, also. So, the surface setting is more recent times, but the film's meta-setting is much further back. Also, director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon brings in several shots of the original film: a late night drive-in shows the original film, and Jami re-enacts scenes from the first film, while the drive-in film plays. This is not an original film. Instead, this is mostly a replay of the first film, with some new sequences and

characters added in along the way. If you have seen the first film, you have seen much of what happens here, as well.

This reviewer was disappointed by several of the film elements. There is some symbolic imagery here. A film reel can be heard spinning as one character is killed. The reel is mimicked with a red, glowing taillight. As well, another film reel plays over a chase sequence. The director wants viewers to know that this is a film and this is a film that is mostly replaying the original. If that is not clear, signs state, "remember," and "forgotten," to remind viewers of the terror brought to the screen in 1976. Also, lighting added some dramatic effect during a murder sequence when bright reds smear across the screen. However, in later scenes, bright oranges and blues are less effective. Instead, they further link the film with the 70s and the garishness of this era. Finally, the director uses every camera trick in his book to make the screen appear interesting: the camera tilts left, then it tilts right; an overhead crane shot, during a farmhouse stalk and chase, looks interesting. But, the directing techniques rarely amplify any tension onscreen. Though, this critic enjoyed the close-ups of the killer's face. Viewers will see malevolence in his eyes. Outside of the costumes, there are only a few elements of creativity here.

The Town that Dreaded Sundown is a fairly average affair. The film is rewatchable, but it lacks any real tension. The killer does manage to strike at an inopportune time or two, yet the violence is muted, especially compared to the actual events. In



1946, the victims were tortured and tormented. Here, the killer can only offer a glare, or a short chase down a forested trail. It would have been more interesting to have the film follow the real life events more closely. As it is, *The Town that Dreaded Sundown* (2014) steers clear of any unsettling material and this film will not stand out in the annals of film, nor put Texarkana on the map again.

- Michael Allen

Turbo Kid EMA Films

Turbo Kid is coming to select theatres in Canada August 27th (check local listings), and arriving on VOD on August 28th on Bell, iTunes, Rogers, Shaw and Vimeo.

Back in the 70s, bicycle motocross racing became popular and for simple reasons made known in *Turbo Kid*, that's the only method of transportation the survivors of the human race can use. Gas is practically nonexistent and water is a precious commodity. In this *Mad Max*-inspired world, a lone boy, simply known as The Kid (Munro Chambers), wants to survive. He trades junk, vestiges of a ruined world and perhaps also his youth, in order to survive. What doesn't get traded are his comic books, as they represent a dream world for him that he hopes to be part of.

However, when he meets Apple (Laurence Leboeuf), a mysterious lady with a kooky personality, what happens next becomes a rite of passage into adulthood. Survival is high impossible when the single-eyed Zeus (Michael Ironside) exerts his control over the people of the Wasteland, much like how Immortan Joe did in *Mad Max: Fury Road*. When he's the only supplier of water, everyone has to bow to him. If only they knew, they'd be fearing him more; his methods of manufacturing this precious liquid is straight out of the alchemical works of John Dee.

When Zeus takes an interest in Apple, a plot develops on whether or not The Kid can live without her or not. He attempts to rescue her, and the insanity that ensues is like watching a Japanese Sentai product cranked up to Astron-6 levels. The blood and gore are over-the-top crazy good. Body parts flop around and you can't help but cheer waiting for that sliced piece of ear to go splat on somebody's face. Although not combined with high intensity BMW

racing, a sequel could potentially be made where fighters on these bikes are wielding lances, trying to knock each other off, with bloody results. A few scenes with impaled skulls suggest there's more to come in this world created by a collective of Quebec filmmakers known as RKSS (Anouk Whissell, Yoann-Karl Whissell and François Simard).

When considering this filmmaking group cited love for *Power Rangers* and synthpop, they certainly succeeded at creating a feel that is straight out of the previous century. The use of props from the 70s and 80s are everywhere. The use of Viewmasters is a fitting nostalgia trip and when considering this tale is set in 1997, watching this movie is like peering into an alternative reality where the Cold War escalated to nuclear levels to leave the planet in ruins. RKSS have wonderfully created a world filled with Easter eggs for Gen X-ers like me to go visually salvaging through like The Kid. These new up-and-coming team of imagineers are a welcome addition to the independent movie scene. I can't wait to see if they will hit the similar levels of insanity that Sushi Typhoon puts in their films.

- Ed Sum

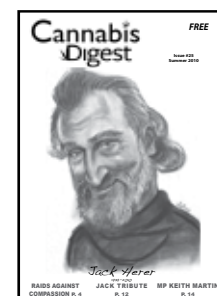


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LEVITATION VANCOUVER

Levitation Vancouver: Best of the Fest

By Michael Luis

This past June, BC's biggest city got psychedelic. Vancouver concert promoter Timbre partnered with the Texas-based Reverberation Appreciation Society to produce a Canadian incarnation of the popular Levitation music festival (previously known as the Austin Psych Fest). While the Texas version features on-site camping, the Vancouver version was more metropolitan. Daytime programming was all-ages and took place at the



outdoor Malkin Bowl, while indoor after-parties occurred throughout various evening venues, such as The Rickshaw Theatre and The Cobalt.

Lineup-wise, the roster stretched the boundaries of what "psychedelic" means. Traditional fuzzed-out 70s-style psych-rock, jangly indie, stoner metal, garage rock, IDM and ambient were all

represented in some capacity.

Headlined by the darkly-hued trio of Black Mountain, The Black Lips and The Black Angels, the fest also featured over 50 other bands on the lineup. Both Malkin Bowl events were surprisingly thin crowd-wise, and the food options (or lack thereof) were atrocious, but most of the night showcases were packed and there were few duds in the selection of the acts.

Absolute Underground's Michael Luis was there and came up with some highlights. For the sake of journalistic integrity, he only took mushrooms once.

Best Comeback: Black Mountain

While figurehead Stephen McBean has paid recent attention to his side-projects, such as the oddball indie-rock Pink Mountaintops and hardcore face-shredders Obliterations, Black Mountain is back, baby. With syrupy-thick riffs and McBean's sleazebag croon in full effect, these guys grooved just as hard as they rocked when they co-headlined on Friday.

Best Supergroup: Witch

This quartet features J. Mascis of Dinosaur Jr. on drums and Kyle Thomas (aka King Tuff) on vocals and guitar. While this is noteworthy, in no shape or form did it overshadow the insane quality of this group's decadently delicious doom metal.

Best Sensory Overload: A Place to Bury Strangers

Imagine if Joy Division and My Bloody Valentine had a baby and then let it be babysat by Lightning Bolt. It's a little like that. The Rickshaw was transformed into a warzone Friday night, as pulsating strobes, billowing fog machines, and earth-quaking guitars pummelled the audience.

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Best Performance Nobody Saw: Ancients

Packing seemingly albums-worth of ideas into just single songs, these metal titans blew the roof off the Electric Owl. Their Sunday night performance was sparsely attended for an acclaimed local group (about 35 headbangers), but those who stuck around were treated to some of the most progressive and forward-thinking sludge metal around. Rumour has it the secret to their sound is the extra "i" in their name.

Best Up-and-Comer: Waingro

These Vancouver locals burst eardrums with a Cancer Bats-esque blend of riff-heavy stoner metal and blistering hardcore. They've made a

name for themselves in BC by mini-touring with the likes of Baptists and Helms Alee, and proved themselves to be a force to watch with their Friday night blitzkrieg.

Best Cameo: Brent Hinds of Mastodon

It was a lovely Sunday surprise to see the face-tatted Hinds emerge from backstage and rip some solos with Curtis Harding and Night Beats. It turns out Hinds plays in a band called Night Sun with Harding, along with members of Night Beats and Black Lips. As I found out from talking to a very drunk Hinds outside the Rickshaw, the guest appearance was a quick pit-stop before jetting off to Europe for some festival dates with the 'Don.

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IFCon Preview

By Ed Sum

Island Fantasy Convention
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Over the past 25 years, Victoria has had pop culture conventions come and go, none of them steady. One of my earliest memories was attending I-Con and sponsored shows, namely *Star Trek*, that had fans congregating inside the Royal Theatre for speeches. I haven't been to all of them, but my introduction to this scene was in the late 80s, when the Empress Hotel was used as the venue for the Big Brothers & Sisters comic book charity show. They brought talent from New York, like artists Sergio Aragonés (*Groo*) and Howard Chaykin (*The Shadow*). I met the editorial staff from Marvel, and I remember getting Jim Shooter and Archie Goodwin's autographs. Those were the good old days, and that was quite the show; it made me a nerd for life. While I continued my love by leaving this city for the bigger shows in the late 90s (there was nothing after I-Con died), I still yearned for a stable fandom event in the city that I call home.

The 21st century changed all that. In the past six years, the new festivals — Gottacon, Cherry Bomb's Ultimate Toy Fair and TsukinoCon — that have popped up for locals to enjoy, show that nerdism is not entirely dead in this garden city. Sadly, of the three, the organizers of Gottacon has decided to not continue due to financial challenges.

Perhaps that's why putting the "I" into a Victoria, BC event is important. Bill Code is one of the event organizers responsible for these new shows. I had a chance to talk to him about the state of geekdom in this city, as he's been indoctrinated far longer than I was.

Absolute Underground: Long time residents of Victoria may recall that you ran similar conventions in the past. It happened in 2001, 2002 and 2009 under different names. Why the change? (i.e. is this year's show a reboot?)

Bill Code: I was a part of various teams of "partners" for each individual event. It seemed that none of us shared the same vision and the left hand never knew what the right hand was doing and it caused all sorts of issues. Sadly for me, I was sort of the "frontman" for the events, so I took any heat based on any of the issues they might have had. So, yes, this is a reboot of sorts. I am running solo. If I am going to take heat, I might as well be responsible for it!

AU: What makes Island Fantasy Convention (IFCon for short) unique in the sea of pop culture conventions that are out there?

BC: Well, I'm not sure it is unique. What it is, is a sincere effort to bring something epic to the culture that is fandom here to South Vancouver Island. What we do, and not very many events in this genre do, is bring a larger variety of pop culture together. I want IFCon to try to cover all of the blanks in the fanfare industry here. We have artists of all wakes coming, movie industry professionals (no matter how big or small) attending, cosplayers showing off their works, a very eclectic variety of authors and much more.

Out of respect to the other "big two," we are shying away from gaming and toys. GottaCon and the Cherry Bomb Toy Show have those tied up and do an epic job. It is not for IFCon to step on toes. That being said, we are massively heavy on celebrity appearances, and hope that we have something for everyone to enjoy!

Something to keep in mind is that this event is very much focusing on raising money for the BC Children's Hospital. It is a not-for-profit event.

AU: Is there sentimentality in wanting to rename this show? As some residents of Victoria will recall, Island Fantasy is a comic book store that was very popular in the 80s to early 90s. What kind of memories do you have from there? Are you looking to recreate some of that fondness from long ago with this event?

BC: Yes. There is huge sentimentality here. The fondest and most endearing part of my childhood, and the biggest influences on my life were what I consider the glory days, and inevitably the foundation of pop culture in Victoria.

I was 12 years old and my dear friend and someone that I consider my family - Dick DeRyk - that owned Island Fantasy Comics hired a reprobate 12-year-old kid to work part time at his store on Fort Street, and that changed my life. I worked at Island Fantasy from 1978 to 1984. There are no real words that I could say or how much fondness and gratitude I can exude that would come close to the love and admiration and thanks I have for Dick. So yes. This is a homage.

There are a few people that stand out in that crowd that I will never forget and I cherish the fact I know them. There's Dick of course, Scott and Mike Petersen, Dan Cawsey, Pattie Whitehouse — way too many to name. Outstanding people.

AU: What can people expect from this year's show?

BC: Well that is a hard call. Victoria is a finicky place. I am expecting a sell-out. I have sold more tickets than expected this far out, and any promoter in this town will tell you we are a last-minute town for sales. The fact that I have heavily packed this event with a huge amount of celebrity drawn from a huge amount of genres helps. It's safe to say that about 6 - 8000 people would be within range. But who knows? Victoria is finicky. We have probably the most awesome silent auction for charity you can imagine. Hidden gems galore!

AU: How much integration will you have planned to get this show to mingle with all the other Halloween-related events happening around town?

BC: Not as much as I would have hoped. I have met with various other event promoters that are doing large-scale Halloween events, but nothing has been solidified as of yet. I guess the worse case scenario here is, "Whoever promotes the event and give the populace the better value wins."

I hope it does not come to that, as I would really like to work with the other promoters to make Halloween off the charts.

AU: Will there be any special trick-or-treating for the evening hours?

BC: I'm trying hard to make this a super cool draw for the kids. We have a massive amount of kid-centric stuff going on at the event. All kids 12 and under get in free. We are in negotiations with various corporations to donate gift bags to all kids in costume that say "trick or treat" when they check in.

We have a really awesome kids' costume contest.

Heroes Inc., Victoria's newest and easily the best Superhero Cosplay Group is doing a huge amount of kid stuff. Kyle Klowns is giving away



free balloon animals and such. We have a 1989 Batmobile and a Batman that will be doing photo ops with the kids. There are just way to many things for kids to do to list here.

AU: For the big celebrity names that you have coming, please tell me why some are returning guests like Lloyd Kaufman, Richard Hatch and Brinke Stevens, while others are new?

BC: Lloyd and Brinke are very much geared towards Halloween events and will be a HUGE asset. I am already getting droves of emails and such about them attending. Richard Hatch has and will always be my "go to guy" for events. Altogether, they're just awesome; Victoria loves them.

As for the new draws. Well, I have already stated I think Victoria is finicky. So I made the decision some time ago to stack the event heavy with a massive amount of celebrities. Again, I want someone at my event that is a draw for pretty much anyone.

AU: What made you decide to have a heavy presence of performers from later seasons of Power Rangers (from Time Force to DinoThunder) instead of the original?

BC: Fandom for the *Power Rangers* is seriously huge and the cult following is shocking. Never in my right mind would I have thought it, but it is true. I have sold more VIP Passes and bulk group tickets to Power Rangers enthusiasts than all other groups combined so far. It is flabbergasting. I have actually formed quite a friendship with

Tabatha Minchew of Minchew Entertainment who handles some of the *Power Rangers* and various other talent.

AU: Was it difficult to convince the folks at Pearkes Recreation Center to let you book several rooms at their venue space to run this convention?

BC: No. They were pretty much excited about the extra real estate rentals. If they had more rooms, I would take them as well. I am so over booked. I am even using the Courtyard out back for events.

AU: Will their Teen Activity Lounge "The Flipside," be integrated to the convention somehow for use?

BC: It will be used for the guests and VIP ticket holders to escape the turmoil [of the exhibit arena]. It is fully sponsored by Thrifty Foods, Vancouver Island Brewery and Island Tradelink (Wine and Champagne). We're going to have a big screen TV playing the cool classics. Hopefully, it'll be *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* most of the time — and a bar that is complimentary for the pass holders.

AU: How many more special events do you foresee happening in the future under the IFCon name? I hear you're planning pop culture themed sea cruises. What's the story there?

BC: The Flight Centre is a sponsor of IFCon. Ed and Julie from the Centre here in town met with me about hosting celebrity cruises. It is a no-brainer. I think pop culture fandom is bigger [now] than it has ever been and people love exclusive recreational opportunities to be intimate with the icons of what they are passionate about. We've had a series of meetings about the direction, and it was decided to launch the IFCON/Minchew Entertainment Celebrity Cruises with the stars from the Power Rangers universe. We'll announce more information in the future dependent on how the inaugural Cruise goes. As for other events... time will tell. I foresee a Zombie Cruise as the next cruise event. We will see.

www.ifconvictoria.com/





Aborted

Interview by Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: With a member lineup that spans 30 countries, you guys have this sort of unique element of ubiquity. How do you stay connected when you're not actively touring or writing music?

Sven de Caluwe: Funny enough, we play video games together online. That's kind of how we do it. Ken and Danny and Mendel and I, we all play like PS4 or whatever, or XBOX. It doesn't matter. We just play games together, and we're just talking online. A lot of times, like right now we're writing, and almost everybody has a home studio, so we demo stuff out, send it to each other and work out things together like that because that's really the only way to be able to do it with the distance.



AU: Aborted is considered one of the grounding forces of death-grind. You've managed to progress your music into the realm of tech-death while still preserving the fundamental authenticity of old-school grind-metal. How do you achieve harmony between sticking with the old and embracing the new?

Sven: I think it's just natural progression. As time goes by the musicians in the band have gotten better, and I think that automatically includes maybe [developing] a few more technical aspects here and there. But the base, the core of the band, it's all about energy. It's nice to show off every now and again and have some technical parts, but it's not the band we are. It's aggressive, it's violent and we've used those parts—the sludgy or the doomy parts—to accentuate the really heavy parts. It's just all about finding balance and what works best—especially what works best live.

AU: The Necrotic Manifesto is one of your fastest, most brutal and most savage-sounding albums to date; it's reminiscent of the Goremadeggon and Archaic Abattoir albums. How would you say it compares to previous albums, and what did you guys set out to achieve upon writing and producing it?

Sven: I think it's mainly a logical continuation of the 2012 record *Global Flatline*, but I think we just took everything a notch higher. It's more extreme; it's more technical; there's a lot more solos. It's just everything a step up, I think... and same with *Global Flatline*. We tried to incorporate the aggressiveness that *Goremadeggon* had, along with the catchy hooks that *Archaic Abattoir* had.

AU: Necrotic Manifesto was released in a limited edition box set. Why did you choose to release this way, and is this a distribution device that you're going to apply to subsequent albums as well?

Sven: We decided to do that because we always try to push ourselves with the limited editions of our new albums because, let's be honest, a lot of the younger kids don't really know buying physical albums. So you have to offer something else besides the CD because otherwise they just get it on iTunes. So in order to sell something physical, you need to put in the extra work. And since we're all gamers, we came up with this card game so that was the best way to do it, to incorporate the nerdiness of the band members while still maintaining the death metal visuals. We created this horror card game where you can play as a member of the band. We created a lot of inside jokes in the cards where you can sort of get to know the members themselves. So we thought it was a good idea for every body to get to know us, and what we actually stand for instead of thinking we're a bunch of fucking lunatics having body parts in our fridges and whatnot. That's what some people believe, believe it or not!

AU: For that album, you guys covered Suffocation's "Funeral Inception" and Sepultura's "Arise." Why those particular songs?

Sven: We had to do a bunch of bonus tracks, and besides the one leftover track that we put on the limited edition, when we do covers we always try to do stuff that influenced us, and clearly

Suffocation was one of our influences when we started, same with Sepultura. I think the songs were the obvious choices for us.

AU: Your music is heavily laden with gory and perverse imagery, and references to monumental horror films of the last 30 years. You use a lot of sound clips from movies such as ReAnimator and similar titles from that era. Outside of writing, recording, jamming and gaming, do you find a lot of time to embrace your evident affinity for the genre?

Sven: Oh yeah, absolutely. We're constantly watching movies. That's all I do back home, it work, watch movies and play video games. So all of us are—I think some of us

are a bit more preoccupied by it than others. I know Ken and I are the biggest movie buffs. JB is more of a go out and get drunk, party guy. The rest of us are a bit more about that stuff.

AU: What are some of your favourite horror movies?

Sven: Well I think it's rather obvious we like *Hellraiser*. All the old Clive Barker movies are some of my favourites—*Nightbreed*... And *ReAnimator*, obviously, but also Jeffery Combs' movies, like *From Beyond* and all that stuff. There are so many good ones from back in the day. A lot of them had bad acting and were silly at times, but there was more of a story development. I usually hate CG in horror movies.

AU: You guys hired illustrator/graphic designer and horror culture devotee Marc Schoenbach of Sadist Art to design the most recent Aborted shirt, the "Dead Skin & Decay" shirt, which is really cool. So how did you guys connect with him and come to work with him on that design?

Sven: I love the whole 80s retro thing, and we had that going with Justin Osborne from Slasher Design, until he got caught stealing. But then I was like, well, we did *Necrotic Manifesto* with Paul Olafson. He's a great artist and he does great death metal artwork, but it doesn't fit us. I was never 100 percent satisfied with it. We needed someone that has a 80s vibe. So I went on a Facebook group called Retro Graphics. I found him there. I liked a lot of his work. We started talking. He'll be doing our next album as well.

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Archspire

Interview by Lacey Paige

Absolute Underground: Archspire is a fairly fresh and innovative addition to the Canadian metal landscape. Going back to the beginning, how did the inception of the band come about?

Spencer: Basically I moved from Victoria to Vancouver with the bass player at the time, Jaron. I was always obsessed with technical death metal and I wanted to start a band, and I knew that Vancouver would be a much better place to find people than Victoria (being a small town). So we started the band and started trying out guitar players. We burned through a whole bunch. We jammed with a few people for quite a while, but the dedication just wasn't there. They weren't down with practicing all the time and spending all their money on the band and everything. We ended up finding Dean on Craigslist and then a little bit after that our friend Oliver, who was also from Victoria, moved to Vancouver. We contacted him and told him what we wanted. He came and tried out and was awesome. And then Tobi, I've known Tobi for quiet a while. We asked him to join.

AU: You guys are one of few Canadian technical death metal bands that has transcended the national border and gained acclamation on an international level. Can you take a moment to reflect on Archspire's burgeoning success?

Spencer: Well, we have a really hardcore work ethic. We jam four nights a week; we all live together. All these tours we've done, we've given up our places to go on tour. We spend a lot of time working on Internet stuff: social media and

stuff like that.

Tobi: Trying to find ways to get our names out there. Obviously it makes it easier nowadays with Facebook; YouTube is also huge for that. So that's been a huge help. It's been a lot easier to get people to listen to us. Because it's such a small niche, so getting people abroad from Europe and stuff like that.

Spencer: We got signed to the first label, Trend Kill, which was from France, and that guy found us on the Internet. He put us on a tour with Decapitated, Fleshgod Apocalypse and Aborted. That was sort of the first real tour we did; we had done one Canadian tour before that. Over there we met the owner of Season of Mist, and obviously we met Sven from Aborted. When we came back, Season of Mist made us a deal so we signed with them. Then the label helped us get our first album out, and after that they helped us get our US Visas, which is a big, challenging thing to do and you basically need a label holding your hand, showing you how to do it. Then we got on Canadian Summer Slaughter, and we started touring with Fallujah quite a bit—I think we've done three or four Fallujah tours now. They took us down to the West Coast in the States, and opened us up to that market. And then Sven from Aborted asked us if we wanted him to manage us. So we made a deal with him. So right now all these doors are opening up, these offers are coming in, we have all these tour plans coming up. It's pretty awesome.

AU: Archspire's aural aesthetic is fusion of traditional melodic death metal and elements of contemporary tech death, with hints of progressive avant-garde metal. Is this the sound that you set out to achieve with your first two albums, *All Shall Align* and *The Lucid Collective*?

Tobi: Naturally, maybe that's how it turned out. Not like specifically being like, let's write this type of metal. Everybody in the band listens to tons of different music on their own and stuff but there are these core bands that we all love so much and so I think with writing and practicing, it totally bleeds into the music and it's something we can all agree on.

AU: Both albums are fairly similar in terms of structure, style and tonality. Did the writing and production process differ at all from each album?

Spencer: Our influences changed a little bit. Our first album we wanted to be the fastest and craziest, and the second album we concentrated more on the overall structure of the songs, sort of trying to write more coherently but always keeping things pretty extreme for the most part.

Tobi: Yeah, that makes sense. Just to make it seem more like when you listen to it, it sounds more like a song and not just a bunch of smashed up riffs together. Whether we achieved that or not, I don't know. We think that we got close to it at least with how picky we were with everything.

AU: How did the production process and the release of *All Shall Align* alter your vision and methodology, and consequently impact the production of *The Lucid Collective*?

Tobi: We recorded with the same engineer, but they had a different studio and the way that they recorded the first album was new for them, doing that style of music. They had never really done it before. They had done metal, hardcore, punk, rap... never extreme death metal. And for us, being in the studio was a bit newer, too. So that was a learning curve for them as well as it was for us. And so the next album, they had a lot of time to work more on their craft of really splicing together more complicated, technical bands. So, I think with that progression we kind of knew a bit more what we wanted.

Spencer: They got better, and they got a better idea of what we wanted. And we got a much better idea for the second album of how they operated and what was [possible] with them. So naturally, the relationship just improved and it became more refined.



AU: Aside from the current tour, what else are you guys working on? Do you have any new material in the works for a third album?

Tobi: We're currently in writing mode and trying to figure out ways to get some pre-production to make our writing process easier and a whole lot less complicated, and trying to fish out ideas as to where maybe that recording is going to be and how we're going to splice it up.

Spencer: We have about two and a half songs written. They're not 100 percent; we always change them. And then we also have a really big tour coming up in September, a major US and Canadian tour again, about six weeks, with a big headliner that we can't say just yet. It hasn't been announced yet. So that will be good. And then it looks like we're going overseas in November for a month as well, with some more big bands that we're not allowed to mention.

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MEH!

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Buck Rogers and Twiki to Land at IFCon

By Ed Sum

When Gil Gerard is not acting, he certainly enjoys being a guest at pop culture conventions. His latest work returns to the world of animation as the voice of the villain Megatronus in *Transformers: Robots in Disguise*. After the recording session, he said that he enjoyed getting back to voice work. "It was fun. They're nice people and they're huge fans of Buck Rogers," said Gerard, "I was happy to do the job and it was a very happy circumstance altogether."

But there's more to his work than meets the eye. His best known past works include *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, *Side Kicks* and *Action Hero Makeover*. When asked if he is interested in reprising his role as Buck, his partner in crime, Felix Silla (who played Twiki in the show) doesn't think it will happen.

"Gil tried to do something but the people who own the rights don't want anything to do with it. They don't want to give up any information," said Silla.

Although Gerard and co-star Erin Gray reunited to play the seminal character's parents in the pilot of James Cawley's *Buck Rogers Begins* internet video series in 2009, nothing further beyond the trailer has really materialized. Perhaps Gerard and Silla will talk more about it when they come to Victoria, BC for Island Fantasy Convention (IFCon) on Halloween weekend, October 2015.

"The best conventions actually have a balance...

[featuring talent from] old and new shows," said Gerard, "It's nice to see the people from the new shows, but it's even better to see the people from the shows you grew up with as well."

In Victoria, they hope to have some time off to see the sights, too, but both stars most enjoy the interaction with fans no matter where they go.

Sometimes these visits can afford the actors privileges not normally allowed for standard tourists. "This July, Gil and I are going to be in Houston, Texas for Space City Comic Con. We went there a couple of years ago and also got to go on this special tour at the Space Centre," said Silla.

When asked about what other works these two really like to be remembered for, Gerard cites *Side Kicks* as a fond favourite.

"This series was made before Disney owned ABC," said Gerard, "It was well-written and the relationship between this hard-bitten detective (which I played) and this young boy (Ernie Reyes Jr.) from another culture was really very interesting. To explore the way they began to adapt to each other and to realize the values from each other's cultures — along with the relationship that they had — was important."

For his part, Silla has fond memories of playing Cousin Itt in *The Addams Family*. He gets recognized for that role, more so than Twiki, and even Bob Hope joked, "There goes Frankie Lane's toupee!" when he visited the set once. This country singer from the 60s was well known for having a mop-top, and it was one of those you-had-to-be-there moments that Silla enjoyed.

"Everywhere I go at different conventions, everyone wants to ask about Cousin Itt," said Silla, "And even at theatrical products, I still get recognized."

The actor recalls going to a production of *The Addams Family* musical where both he and Ted Cassidy (Lurch) got a standing ovation. Even at one *Star Wars* Celebration, when he was there signing autographs for his role as Wunka (the Ewok who flew the hand glider), he remembered a family from Arizona arriving at his table all dressed as the Addams. Sadly, he had no material from his seminal show to offer, as the event was to spotlight *Star Wars*.

Both performers will, no doubt, have more stories to tell, and perhaps spoilers to reveal in regards to their upcoming work. While Gerard is more active than Silla, to see them together again will be great. If Erin Gray has time off from her busy schedule, who knows, maybe a reunion will happen in Victoria.

"At least for Gil Gerard and I, we are going to have a lot of fun talking about our work in *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*. At our Q&A, I promise you we're going to share a lot laughs," said Silla.

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SOIL WORK

Soilwork

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most infamous for?

Dirk Verbeuren: I'm Dirk Verbeuren, drummer in Soilwork. I'm most infamous for a blastbeat I invented called the "Dirk Blast".

AU: You're poised to release your tenth full-length album this month... tell us about it! What sets it apart from past releases? What can we expect to hear?

DV: *The Ride Majestic* is the kind of album that only reveals itself after multiple listens. Musically I'd say it's a darker, more massive [version of] *The Living Infinite*. There's a melancholy "end of the world" vibe throughout the album. It's pretty fast, too. Songs like "The Phantom" and "Of Hollow Dreams" remind me of the band's early days.

AU: What themes or topics do the lyrics on the new album explore? Are there any particular inspirations behind this music this time around?

DV: Life, or rather death, gave us ample inspiration this time around. Several people close to us passed away while we wrote and recorded *The Ride Majestic*. This engulfed us with a vast array of feelings which ended up finding their way into the music and lyrics. *The Ride Majestic* ponders the meaning of it all: how to cope with losing a loved one, how to find peace in letting them go, and how to face the inevitability of our own death.

AU: Speaking of inspiration, what do you guys draw from, musically or otherwise? Do you have any inspirations that might surprise us?

DV: David loves the works of jazz/fusion guitar player Scott Henderson. Bjorn has a Stevie Nicks tattoo- that says it all. Sylvain swears by Eddie Van Halen. Sven listens to a lot of dark, trippy stuff like Bohren Und Der Club of Gore. Markus comes from the hardcore side of things. As for me, I grew up listening to pop music and old school rap/hip-hop like Run-DMC, Beastie Boys and Public Enemy before becoming a thrash/death/grindcore addict.

AU: You released *The Living Infinite*, the first double album in melodic metal history, in 2013... what was the inspiration behind this release? Can we expect any more in the future?

DV: We wanted to recapture the feeling of the classic double albums we grew up with: Kiss *Alive II*, Prince's *Sign 'O' The Times*, Bruce Springsteen's *The River*, etc. We made *The Living Infinite* to show the world that Soilwork is a force to be reckoned with. Judging by the overwhelming response, the message was received loud and clear! We plan on doing a triple album next time.

AU: The live DVD, *Live in the Heart of Helsinki*, was just released this spring... how has the reception been? For those of us that haven't seen it yet, what can we expect?

DV: By all accounts, people are in love with this DVD! It's an energetic and dynamic piece of live music, true to who we are. The setlist spans every Soilwork album, from *Steelbath Suicide* all the way to *The Living Infinite*. It was an absolutely epic night, carried by an electrified crowd of Finnish Soilwork maniacs!

AU: October sees you guys touring Canada with Soulfly and Decapitated... a pretty stellar lineup! What are your hopes or expectations for this tour?

DV: We will blow our fans away with a revamped setlist, and I know for a fact that we'll capture the hearts of hordes of new followers along the way. It really is a killer touring package and we're very grateful to be a part of it. We all grew up idolizing Max Cavalera during his years in Sepultura. Decapitated are, in my humble opinion, one of the best extreme metal bands out there today. We're determined to absolutely kill it each and every night on this tour!

AU: You guys have toured Canada plenty before, right? What is your favourite Canadian city to play in? How do you find it compares to the United States or Europe as a touring destination?

DV: Canada has its own unique vibe. It's always a huge blast to play for our Canadian fans. I recall a show at a roller rink in the dead of winter some years ago. The conditions were pretty rock'n roll but the crowd was just insane! Montreal and its distinctly European feel is a favourite, for sure. But we like playing everywhere in Canada, to be honest.

AU: Is there anywhere you haven't toured yet that you've always wanted to go?

DV: We're finally visiting India for the first time next year to play Bangalore Open Air. Pretty exciting! South America is also in the works, we've somehow never made it down there so it's about time!

AU: What's the craziest thing that's ever happened on a Soilwork tour? Touring as much as you guys do, there must be some stories!

DV: At last year's Hellfest, our ex-bassist Ola Flink did a jump during the intro to "Spectrum Of Eternity" and went straight through the stage. He disappeared as the stage collapsed on top of him with monitors and all. We were in disbelief for a

good 15 seconds. It was scary at first, but once he popped out smiling and unscathed, it became one of the most hilarious moments we've ever experienced!

AU: What does the future have in store for Soilwork? What's next up for you guys? Any ambitious long-term goals?

DV: The immediate future holds plenty of touring worldwide in support of *The Ride Majestic*. We will not rest until we've played our music for as many people as we possibly can. In the long term, we want to keep releasing exciting records and hopefully be recognized for our hard work.



We've been underestimated for many years and some people still think of us as a second-tier band, but truth is, our unique sound has influenced a lot of modern bands. Skeptics should give our recent albums a few spins and they'll realize that Soilwork stands for top notch melodic death metal!

AU: We're certainly looking forward to having you play here in Canada... Do you have any final words for your Canadian fans?

DV: We can't wait to rip and tear through Canada with a memorable and majestic show that will leave you dying for more!

www.soilwork.org/

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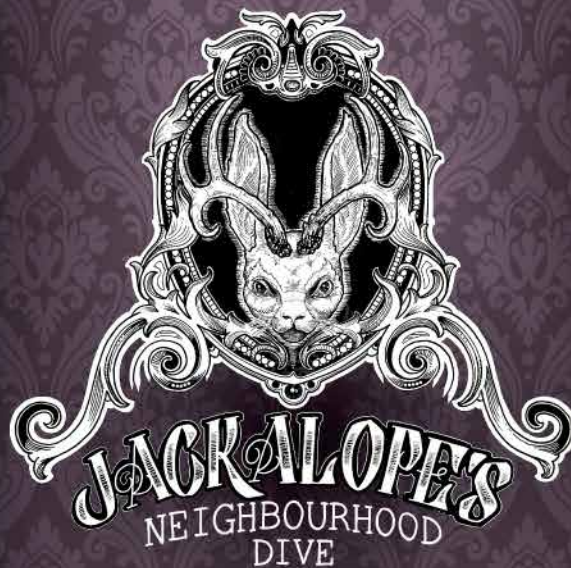
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